

## DRAMA

# CRITIQUE

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THEATRE ARTS AND LITERATURE

*Published three times yearly by the*

*National Catholic Theatre Conference*

Member of the Catholic Press Association

## CONTENTS

Volume III	November, 1960	Number 3
The World of Philip Barry.....	Emmet Lavery	98
The Meaning of Theatre.....	G. K. Chesterton	108
Marlowe's Solar Symbolism.....	John J. McAleer	111
On Off-Broadway.....	Brother Luke M. Grande, F.S.C.	132
The American Theater's Anthologist-in-Chief.....	Maureen McManus	137
Drama Bookshelf.....		139
Index to Volume Three.....		144

Editor: Sister Mary Marguerite, R.S.M., Mercy College, Detroit, Michigan

Associate Editors: Donald Hugh Dickinson, Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois

James P. Foote, Mercy College, Detroit, Michigan

Advisory Editors: Rev. Gabriel Stapleton, S.D.S., St. Mary High School, Lancaster, New York

Rev. Urban Nagle, O.P., College of St. Mary of the Springs, Columbus, Ohio

Rev. Thomas J. Bresnahan, Mercy College, Detroit, Michigan

Rev. Gilbert Hartke, O.P., Catholic University, Washington, D.C.

Rev. Dominic Rover, O.P., Catholic University, Washington, D.C.

Contact-Placement Editor: Sister Mary LaVerne, O.S.F., College of St. Francis, Joliet, Illinois

Contributing Editors: Leonard Casper, D. Hugh Dickinson, John T. Dugan, Richard A. Duprey, John Gassner, Gilbert V. Hartke, O.P., George Herman, C. Robert Kase, Emmet Lavery, L. LaMont Okey, Dominic Rover, O.P., SaraLee Stadelman, Gabriel Stapleton, S.D.S., Euphemia Van Rensselaer Wyatt, Lionel D. Wyld.

Published at Detroit, Michigan, for the National Catholic Theatre Conference, Executive Office, Lancaster, New York.

NCTC memberships (subscriber, \$5.00; package subscriber \$5.00; regular \$10.00; sustaining \$25.00; life \$100.00) include subscription to DRAMA CRITIQUE for which \$3.00 is set aside for a year's subscription. Single copies \$1.25. All memberships should be sent to the NCTC Executive Office, 142 Laverack Avenue, Lancaster, N.Y.

Manuscripts and circulation inquiries should be addressed to the Editor, DRAMA CRITIQUE, Mercy College, 8200 West Outer Drive, Detroit 19, Michigan. All manuscripts should conform to the Chicago Manual of Style.

Advertising inquiries should be addressed to Brother Julius Herbert, F.S.C., NCTC Executive Office, Lancaster, N.Y.

## THE WORLD OF PHILIP BARRY

By EMMET LAVERY

Philip Barry is dead eleven years now but his world is very much alive: a world which is young, full of hope, and full of belief in the life eternal.

This is a special world, of course. It exists more in the Barry plays than it does in contemporary life. Sheer joy, as the angels would understand the word, seems to be out of fashion. The dark nights of the soul are now in possession of a large part of the stage. The nights get longer and darker. And yet—

There is still a place for laughter at high noon. Not always on Broadway, perhaps, but certainly in the college and in the university theatres. We see this and we feel this every time someone revives *Paris Bound*, or *Holiday*, or *The Philadelphia Story*.<sup>1</sup> For an hour or two, we are transformed. We live once more in a civilized world in which civilized people know how to make fun of their own foibles. Virtue is quite attractive, almost sophisticated. Marriage emerges as an admirable and enduring institution. Tradition seems like something worth having. Morals too.

Morals! Now, there's a word to catch the conscience of a king or even of a critic. A hard word, as St. Paul might say, a difficult word for many people in the contemporary theatre. They would so much rather say "mores" or even "manners" in their eagerness to escape anything approaching an absolute or a continuing sense of values. In fact, many critics still refer approvingly to some of Barry's most popular plays as "comedies of manners."

But they are not, except incidentally, about "manners" at all. They are about the "morals" of his time and so are the comedies of Richard Brinsley Sheridan. This is why Sheridan survives and Barry, too. They are involved with the soul of man and the soul of man is timeless.

For Barry, as well as Sheridan, the moral sense is the cutting edge—the inevitable norm—by which everything else is to be weighed and measured. Gracefully stated, naturally. Or full of grace, if you prefer to turn the phrase around. Artfully arranged, but clearly and inevitably present at all times.

True, Barry would be the first to say that there is more to comedy than comedy, and more to tragedy than tragedy. Life is one and indivisible. Comedy walks hand in hand with tragedy at the most unexpected moments. Some of the critics, to be sure, could never quite understand this. A serious thinker for them

<sup>1</sup> A complete list of the Barry plays, in the order of their publication, will be found at the end of this article.

Emmet Lavery, one of the founders of the National Catholic Theatre Conference, is the author of *The First Legion*, *The Magnificent Yankee*, *Monsignor's Hour*, and other plays.

was a fellow who wrote serious plays. A man who wrote lighthearted comedies was a lighthearted fellow. And yet—

This was a lot of nonsense and most thoughtful people in the theatre knew it for such. Barry, particularly. We talked about it a little, the first and only time I ever met him. It was May of 1939, and my wife and I were on the way to Paris where *The First Legion*<sup>2</sup> was about to reach its two-hundredth performance at the Vieux Colombier.

The first time I saw Paris—it is the feast day of Jeanne d'Arc . . . the chestnut trees are in bloom everywhere . . . and on the boulevards there are mounted guards of honor in splendid array . . . on the square before the Church of St. Sulpice, the statues of Bossuet and Fenelon stand serenely, back to back . . . inside the church, there is a small symphony orchestra tucked away behind the main altar . . . with silver trumpets to announce the Gospel at High Mass . . . uncanonical, perhaps, but appropriately dramatic.

But, as sometimes happens in *Hotel Universe*, this is getting ahead of the story. In May of 1939, we are aboard the *Normandie*, a day or so out from Le Havre, and Denyse Clairouin (who later died in the Resistance) has arranged a meeting with Barry in his cabin. I look forward to the appointment eagerly but with a certain amount of diffidence. I am an old Barry fan, but I am hardly what the theatre would call an established playwright. It's exciting that *The First Legion* is beginning to find friends in Europe, but I am more impressed by the fact that Barry is currently represented with another smash hit on Broadway, *The Philadelphia Story*.

How will we hit if off? I need not have worried. We might have known each other for years. We might have been neighbors in his early days in Rochester. Barry is as charming and easy to know as one of his own characters. He is also disarmingly candid.

"I always wanted to make my mark with plays like *John*, *The Joyous Season* and *Here Come the Clowns*," he tells me, "but the critics wouldn't have it. So they decide that *The Philadelphia Story*, which took three weeks to write, is a hit and *Here Come the Clowns*, which represents two years' work, is a failure. How do you explain it? How does anyone explain it?"

Barry proceeds to talk about *You and I*<sup>3</sup> which introduced him to Broadway in 1923. This was the play which had won him a first prize in 1922 when he was a postgraduate student in Baker's Workshop '47 at Harvard, the play that was later produced by Richard Herndon at the Belmont Theatre in New York. It was also the play that established the style that was to distinguish the Barry comedies: a lean, clean line, with a deft feeling for character and an amiable regard for life.

<sup>2</sup> *The First Legion* (New York: Samuel French, 1955; Munich: Kurt Desch Verlag, 1955).

<sup>3</sup> Actually, *You and I* was preceded by an earlier play, *A Punch for Judy*, in 1921, at the Morosco Theatre. But this was not a Broadway production in the technical sense of the word. It was a presentation of the Harvard Workshop.

"I don't suppose anyone would believe it if you put it into a play, but this is the way it all began," Barry recalls. "I had written *You and I*, taken a wife, and gone to Europe on a wonderful holiday, not counting the cost, not worrying about the future. I had no idea what we were going to do when we got back to New York, but everything worked out. The day before we landed, there was the cable under the door with the good news. The play had been optioned by Richard Herndon. We were on the way!"

Barry goes on to speak about the music in *Paris Bound* (1927) which he had expanded into a ballet-with-words entitled *The Wild Harps Playing*: an adventure of the spirit which was later reworked into a less interesting adventure in patriotism called *Liberty Jones* (1941). Actually, there was not much of a market in those days for anything new in ballet, principally because Agnes de Mille had not yet revolutionized the approach to ballet in the theatre. Yet Barry was convinced that some day in the theatre there would be a way to blend words and music and dancing without the result having to be merely another musical comedy or a light opera.

And what a wonderful story he has to tell! This is the last holiday of Miss Mary Clancy, a rich girl from Park Avenue, who had only a few minutes left in the life of here-and-now. She is attended by a strange "Dr. Michael" who is able to grant her whatever her last wish may be. She wishes to "do the town" once more and so the matter is arranged without even the proverbial twinkling of an eye. Dr. Michael and Miss Clancy venture forth. Comes the great second act, when the Major Domo at a Park Avenue ball announces "Miss Mary Clancy and the Archangel Michael." The enchanted women descend in a body upon Michael and he, with the natural prerogatives of an Archangel, executes a leap worthy of Nijinsky and vanishes into the wings.

There was more than this to the story, of course, but this is what I remember of it twenty years later, without recourse to any notes or any scripts. I never saw *Liberty Jones* when The Theatre Guild produced it in 1941 nor did I want to, particularly: it was more fun to remember the ballet as Barry first described it, and as I read it when I got back to New York. Here, surely, was the better and eternal part of Barry: light, deft, soaring free in outer space, and as sure-footed as the Archangel he was writing about.

The visit with Barry was all too brief, a golden moment in a golden day, but the memory still lingers. It is like the afterglow of one of his own plays. I took this up once with Arthur Hopkins when we were preparing *The Magnificent Yankee* (1945) for production. Arthur had presented and had staged *Holiday*, when it was presented at the Plymouth Theatre in New York in 1928. I hadn't known Arthur then, or Barry either, but *Holiday* was one of my favorite plays—it still is, in fact—and I thought this was a good opportunity to catch up on a little theatre history. I asked my share of questions and then I tried to sum up how I felt about the play.

"You know, it's a strange thing," I told Arthur, "but I can remember exactly how I felt seventeen years ago on first seeing that play. My wife and I had front-row seats in the balcony and we were enchanted. I've seldom felt so good or happy



about anything and when I left the theatre, I felt as if I were just as witty, bright, and engaging as any of the people in the play. I felt as if I were walking on air!"

"Of course," Arthur murmured softly. "Didn't everyone?"

Didn't *everyone*? Yes, of course. There's the key. Everyone did feel the same way after seeing a Barry play. Life was good and, despite its occasional pain, well worth the living. And most of the people you met were people you'd like to meet again.

How many times has that happened to you recently in the theatre?

To look back at the Barry plays now, and to read them in sequence, is to realize how consistent he was about some of his basic themes and how quick to state them at the very outset. For instance, in the matter of money: take the scene in *You and I* where Matey, the father who wanted to be an artist, has just discovered that his son is to marry young, and may very well settle for security instead of holding out for the kind of adventure that Matey had dreamed of:

#### MATEY

Sometimes—when I think that I haven't yet done the thing I wanted to do—my forty-three years do seem rather futile and misspent . . . Geoff, business is a dump for dreams. I believe every fourth man in it has something shut down in him. You can see it in their faces. Some of them wanted to paint, like me—some to write, to sing—to be doctors, lawyers—God bless me, even preachers! But expediency ordered it otherwise. And now most of them will die in the traces, poor devils . . . die of market reports—Babsonitis—hardening of the soul. . . .

Barry took a dim view of security and of money for the mere sake of money. So it is not surprising a few years later (fourteen to be exact) to find young Johnny Case enlarging on the theme in *Holiday*. Johnny is not an artist, except in the art of living, but he knows what he wants. He wants to be free when he is young and he tries to explain to Julia's wealthy father why he doesn't want to make *too* much money too soon:

#### JOHNNY

You see, sir—it's always been my plan to make a few thousands early in the game, if I could, and then quit for as long as they last, and try to find out who I am and what I am and what goes on and what about it—now, while I'm young and feel good all the time . . . please don't make me feel guilty about it, sir . . . even if it turns out to be just one of those fool ideas that people dream about and then go flat on—even if I find I've had enough of it in three months, still I want it . . . I want these years now, sir. . . .

Eleven years afterward, in *The Philadelphia Story*, we find Barry returning to the same theme on various occasions. Only this time there's a wry twist to the humor, very wry. First, it's Dexter Haven, the dashing ex-husband, who turns up on the eve of Tracy Lord's second wedding:

#### DEXTER

It's astonishing what money can do for people, don't you agree, Mr.

Connor? Not too much, you know—just more than enough. Particularly for girls. Look at Tracy. There's never been a blow that hasn't been softened for her. There'll never be one that won't be softened—why, it even changed her shape—she was a dumpy little thing originally.

Next, it's Tracy herself and Mike. (Macauley) Connor, the reporter from *Destiny*, at work on a profile of the wedding:

TRACY

Did you enjoy the party?

MIKE

Sure. The prettiest sight in this fine, pretty world is the Privileged Class enjoying its privileges . . . consider, gentle reader, they toil not, neither do they spin.

TRACY

Oh, yes they do! They spin in circles.

And then, when Mike and Tracy are on their way to a Main Line party the night before the scheduled wedding to George Kittredge:

TRACY

And remember, Mike—"with the rich and mighty—"

MIKE

". . . always a little patience." Yes, Highness, I will.

Yes, Barry managed to laugh at money and he made everyone else laugh at it, too. But he never laughed at marriage. (In *The Philadelphia Story*, Tracy remarries her first husband.) From the beginning this was something sacred—something sacramental: the love of one man for one woman, in good times and in bad, now and forever, till death them do part. Consider, for a moment, the scene in *You and I*, when Nancy (the wife) is beginning to comprehend the meaning of Matey's restlessness:

NANCY

Dear, it seems to me that you've about everything that a person could desire. We've most of the good things of life—health—position—enough money—a happy family—and we've—each other. Nor is ours the tame, settled love most people have at forty. Some blessed good fortune has kept the keen edge on it. I love my children—but compared to you—Oh, Matey! I fancy—there's more woman in me than mother.

The "keen edge"! There's a notion that occurs and recurs in Barry with relation to the holy and (properly) joyous state of matrimony. It's the same feeling for the "salt and the savor" which we find in his last play, *Second Threshold*;<sup>4</sup> a truly Catholic note which no Puritan could possibly understand.

<sup>4</sup> *Second Threshold* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951; New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1951).

It recognizes both the bitter and the sweet, but it takes its position firmly on the side of the angels. It recognizes that the wife is just as important as the mother and, in the spirit of the early Fathers, it lines up the basic priorities: first the wife, then the mother, but above all Love—the Love that unifies and gives meaning to everything else.

Read once more the scene in Act III of *Paris Bound*, where James Hutton tries to explain to Mary, his daughter-in-law, the rumored defections of his son, Jim:

JAMES

I don't mean to belittle sex. It holds a high and dishonored place among other forms of intoxication. But love is something else again, and marriage is still another thing—

MARY (bitterly)

Yes, and a great thing, isn't it? Man's most divine conception—pure poetry—religion—sacrament—

JAMES

By heaven, it ought to be!

MARY

I was rather for it myself, if you'll remember. It was church for me, all right. But now, you see, I'm left with all the candles out, and rosy windows smashed and rotten ragtime playing through my church, where there was nothing but plain chant and Palestrina all the whole day long. I think I *have* lost something—

Has there been in our time a more poignant description of marriage-on-the-rocks? Who else, except for Thornton Wilder no doubt, would dare to compare modern marriage to plain chant and Palestrina, and the impending break-up of a marriage to "rotten ragtime playing through my church"? Here, as elsewhere in Barry's plays, the marriage bond is exalted and protected. Yet, strangely enough, there were people in 1927 who said they were "scandalized" by *Paris Bound*. The same people did not seem quite so disturbed by *Tomorrow and Tomorrow* in 1931 and *The Animal Kingdom* (with Leslie Howard) in 1932, although these plays were equally frank about the problems of marriage. They were also equally successful but, for many of us, they are not the aesthetic equal of *Paris Bound* and they never were. There is at times a kind of blunt sensationalism about these plays, in deliberate bidding for dramatic effect *per se*, which is not present in the earlier script.

As time flies in the theatre, it is a year between the production of *Paris Bound* and *Holiday*, and eleven years between *Holiday* and *The Philadelphia Story*. But what is time? As Barry points out in *Hotel Universe*, time is a purely relative thing. On any library shelf, the two comedies of the late twenties and the comedy of the late thirties should stand side by side. They are three of a kind: a kind that is all too rare in the theatre. They have the same warmth, gaiety, and gallantry. They are cool, clear, and crisp and each one stands on its own merits. These are not interchangeable carbons.

True, the backgrounds are familiar and some of the characters seem like old

friends. Each deals with love and marriage, either on Park Avenue, or along the Main Line. Each is concerned with the inevitable complexities of family relationships. Yet each is different. Each explores a new field, often something that was merely hinted at in the play before: for instance, the love of a father for a daughter. This is a theme that runs through many of the plays but nowhere is it stated more forcefully than it is by Seth to his daughter Tracy in *The Philadelphia Story*:

SETH

... I suppose the best mainstay a man can have as he gets along in years is a daughter—the right kind of daughter—one who loves him blindly—as no good wife ever could, of course. One for whom he can do no wrong—

Barry returns to this theme, in more serious vein, in *Second Threshold*. This is the script which Robert Emmet Sherwood edited and put together for production in 1951, two years after Barry's death. In many ways, it is one of the most interesting of all the plays. Not as successful, of course, and not quite the play it would have been if Barry had lived to finish it. It deserves attention, however, and so does the gracious and self-effacing preface to the play by Sherwood.

In the notes for *Second Threshold*, which Barry had been assembling for eleven years, Sherwood found some revealing items. On the character of Josiah Bolton, the father: "The man of 42 at the end of his soul's rope, recovering from attempt at suicide." On the relationship of Miranda, the daughter, to Josiah: "Two people whom life has treated badly . . . companions in adversity . . . the perfect combination: mature wisdom with youthful freshness . . . love without the complications."

Love without the complications! Has there ever been a more appealing concept of the father-daughter relationship, even if in real life the relationship isn't always that simple? No wonder we respond as we do to Tracy Lord and to Miranda Bolton. These are the daughters Barry might have had or, to put it more precisely, the daughter that Barry had for just a little while.

"Phil and Ellen Barry had two sons who are now very able young men," Sherwood recalled in the course of the preface. "Their only daughter died in infancy, and this was a dreadful blow. I believe that in Phil's fanciful imagination this daughter lived and grew and one may see his concept of her in girls that he wrote, especially Tracy Lord and Miranda Bolton."

With these notes in hand, let us take a second look at *Second Threshold*. Barry is considering quite realistically what happens when a daughter identifies herself too readily with her father's taste and, to his sad surprise, considers marrying a man who is about her father's age. Even here Barry has the saving grace: he can not let Josiah wallow in self-pity. In the midst of some serious soul-searching, Josiah stops and observes, with wry good humor, the uncomplicated mind of Thankful Mather, his daughter's young friend:

JOSIAH

Look at Thankful, sitting there—so exquisitely innocent—so uncon-

fused—so hungry. A glass of milk, a ham on rye—and thou. They are rare in this world, the true innocents—born without original sin, I expect—at least, without the sense of guilt that rides the rest of us. Whatever their age, they never grow old. They live and breathe youth, and impart it to others. They are the life-givers.

Consider, too, the scene where Josiah, teasing his daughter, Miranda, is pretending to be attracted by the beautiful-but-dumb Thankful. Here also a large measure of truth is spoken in jest:

#### JOSIAH

Wait! I have an announcement. I've made a discovery. As follows: the man who said of youth that no one knows its value until he's too old to enjoy it—that man was wrong! The great, the astonishing thing about it is that it may be enjoyed twice. Once, through one's own youth—and later, and better—through that of another. So—let's turn somersaults, let's swim out to the raft, let's go crabbing, let's have an ice-cream soda; the hermit has emerged from his cave, the monk from his cell; in brief and to wit, I have found a girl—living, breathing, laughing, loving—and my own.

*Second Threshold*, of course, is more than a play about a father and a daughter. It is a play about Faith and about Hope: it harks back in tone to plays like *John* (1927) and *The Joyous Season* (1934),<sup>5</sup> but it has much more in common, in style as well as spirit, with two of Barry's most impressive plays: *Hotel Universe* (1930) and *Here Come the Clowns* (1938). *John* has its moments and so does *The Joyous Season*, which Arthur Hopkins chose to revive in 1945. But *John* seems a little stiff and self-conscious, even in its slangy episodes, and *The Joyous Season* is almost too respectful of its theme: it has warmth, laughter, and wisdom, but it seems a shade too proper at times; it lacks the free swinging quality of the earlier comedies.

All four of the plays have, for many years, been written off as distinguished failures. However, as sometimes happens, the critics were only fifty percent right. *Hotel Universe* and *Here Come the Clowns*, which were plays far ahead of their time, are just now coming into their own. More and more college and community theatres are beginning to discover their true worth. As these notes are being put together, word comes from Elliott Norton—a critic who is the exception to all notions about critics—that Boston University students are reviving *Here Come the Clowns*<sup>6</sup> under the direction of Eddie Dowling, who created the leading role in the original New York production. And here in Los Angeles, students of Mount Saint Mary's College have been preparing a revival of *Hotel Universe* under the direction of Dale O'Keefe.

Strangely enough, *Here Come the Clowns* is out of print, but this does not seem to discourage people who are looking for adult plays on

<sup>5</sup> *The Joyous Season* (Samuel French) is dedicated to Barry's sister, Mother Agnes Barry, who is now Superior Vicar of the Washington Vicariate of the Religious of the Sacred Heart.

<sup>6</sup> On September 20, 1960, *Here Come the Clowns* was revived at the Actors Playhouse in Sheridan Square, New York. Howard Taubman, the new drama critic for *The New York Times*, gave high praise to the production but expressed some reservations about the play.

adult themes.<sup>7</sup> And what a truly adult play it still is! Stark, frank, crisp, eloquent: it faces squarely some of the great questions in a small bar on a Saturday night. If God is still in His heaven, why is there evil in the world? How can there be evil in the world? As we observe the troubles of various people, we gradually find the answer: the answer is in "free will." Once the Lord granted man free will, He has to grant it to all men. We are all free to exercise our free will on our neighbor and he on us, but there's no easy appeal to Heaven when the going is difficult. The Umpire can't step in and change the rules of the game just because someone gets hurt; If He did, we wouldn't be free, and we wouldn't have the thing we call "free will."

This, naturally, was difficult for some of the first-nighters to take. "Inconclusive," one or two were heard to murmur. (This was also the reaction in some circles to Thornton Wilder's approach to the "purgatory" scene in the last act of *Our Town*.) Others thought the play begged the question, merely because the answer was not an easy one. Some found it just plain baffling. What was all this about "free will"? If you wanted to write a play about God and His creatures, you had to assume that God *was* in His heaven, didn't you? And if He was in heaven, He had to do something about something, didn't He?

There were other people who thought it just wasn't sporting of Barry to write about God at all. Why didn't he stick to things he knew something about, like Park Avenue and the Main Line? The truth was, if anyone stopped to think about it, Barry was writing about the things he knew about and he was writing about them just as smartly as he ever did in *Paris Bound* or *Holiday*. Even more smartly, for in *Hotel Universe* he adds an extra dimension or two: he scrambles time completely, his characters live on several levels simultaneously, just as we do in our own minds. Listen to Stephen Field in *Hotel Universe*:

STEPHEN

I have found out a simple thing: that in existence there are three estates. There is this life of chairs and tables, of getting up and sitting down. There is the life one lives in one's imagining, in which one wishes, dreams, remembers. There is the life past death, which in itself contains the others. The three estates are one. We dwell now in this one, now in that—but in whichever we may be, breezes from the others still blow upon us.

PAT

I'm sorry, I don't follow you.

STEPHEN

There are no words for it. It is a sense, a knowing. It may come upon you in a field one day, or as you turn a corner, or one fine morning, as you stoop to lace your shoe. . . .

A sense, a knowing! Yes, of course, this was something that Barry had on several levels, too. It accounts for his breadth, his depth, and his irrepressible feeling of joy triumphant. And the faith that tied all of these elements together.

<sup>7</sup> Though the play is now out of print, a limited number of Coward-McCann (1939) copies are still available.



Turn back, for a moment, to Christina—the Mother Superior—who is spending Christmas with her Boston family in *The Joyous Season*:

CHRISTINA

. . . you see, I believe faith to be of first importance. I believe it is the soul's adventure out of sight of land. It seems to me that in this house you—all of you—hug the shore.

Well, it will never be said of Philip Barry that he hugged the shore. He was "out of sight of land" when he wrote *Hotel Universe*, when he wrote *Here Come the Clowns*—yes, and when he wrote *Second Threshold*, too. But we, thank heaven, are moving nearer to him all the time. And—

With all due respect to Robert Emmet Sherwood and his foreword to *Second Threshold*, I doubt very much that there were *two* Philip Barrys in Barry's own mind: one who wrote comedies and one who wrote serious plays. I think that concept existed more in the minds of the critics than anywhere else. And, if you should doubt this, just try reading *Holiday* and *Second Threshold* in quick succession. You'll find a lot of Johnny Case in Josiah Bolton and a lot of Josiah in Johnny. One is young and one is (almost) old, but they are both pure Barry all the way. There's a gleam in the eye and there's hope in the heart. Life is better than Death and the Light always outshines the Dark—at least in a Barry play.

May God give him as much joy as he gave to us—

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barry, Philip. *Second Threshold*. Revisions and Preface by Robert E. Sherwood. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951. Dramatists Play Service, 1951.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Preface to *The Philadelphia Story*. From *Best Plays of the Modern American Theatre*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1947.
- Catholic Authors, 1930-1947*. Newark: St. Mary's Abbey Press, 1947.

PRODUCTION RECORD

The following plays, with the exception of *Second Threshold*, are published by Samuel French Inc.:

*You and I* (1923), *The Youngest* (1924), *In a Garden* (1925), *White Wings* (1926), *John* (1927), *Paris Bound* (1927), *Holiday* (1928), *Hotel Universe* (1930), *Tomorrow and Tomorrow* (1931), *The Animal Kingdom* (1932), *The Joyous Season* (1934), *Spring Dance*, adaptation (1936), *Here Come the Clowns* (1938), *The Philadelphia Story* (1939), *Liberty Jones* (1941), *Without Love* (1942), *Foolish Notion* (1945), *Second Threshold*, Dramatists Play Service (1951). Samuel French is also the publisher of *Cock Robin*, a collaboration with Elmer Rice.

## THE MEANING OF THE THEATRE \*

By G. K. CHESTERTON

The more mobs I have seen the more firmly I tend to conclude that their prejudices have always at the back of them some errant and nameless virtue. When ten thousand men all assert a certain view without any reason, we may conclude, generally speaking, that they have a very good reason indeed. They may be wrong, of course, but they have an idea. The mistakes of the populace, which has in all ages stoned the prophets and resisted progress, were not in any case due to the fact that they were entirely wrong. They were due to the fact that they were upon some point right, and could not clearly and intellectually realize how right they were.

Now, the resistance of the conventional mind to Ibsenism and what is called the new drama is fundamentally right, because it is a vague and prejudiced resistance against a movement which threatens or denies the very existence of the drama itself; which is, in short, an attack on the ultimate meaning of the theatre. For what is the theatre? First and last, and above all things, it is a festival. In the dim ages, almost before the dawn of Greece, it was a religious festival; it was founded in order that men might dance and give praise to a deity. Today, after a thousand changes, it is still a festival; it is continued in order that crowds out of Hammersmith and Camberwell may gather and sing the praise of life. The theatre is nothing if it is not joyful; the theatre is nothing if it is not sensational; the theatre is nothing if it is not theatrical. A play may be happy, it may be sad, it may be wild, it may be quiet, it may be tragic, it may be comic, but it must be festive. It must be something which works men up to a point, something which is passionate and abrupt and exceptional, something which makes them feel, however gross the phrase may seem, that they have in reality got a shilling's worth of emotion. It must be a festival. It must, in modern phraseology, be a "treat." To the primitive Greek, the loud, wild praise of Dionysus was a treat. To the modern child the pantomime of "Cinderella" is a treat. The true meaning of the theatre is thoroughly expressed in both. If it is a treat, a festival, it matters nothing whether it is comic or tragic, realistic or idealistic, Ibsenite or Rostand-esque, happy or pitiful; it is a play. If it is "like Life," if it represents the dull and throbbing routine of our actual life and exhibits only the emotions with which we commonly regard it, the internal merit matters nothing; it is not a play. That is the damning, but neglected, error of so much modern drama; the play fails to be a festival; and therefore, fails to be a play.

This difference between the internal merits and what may be called the external merits of a work of art may easily be illustrated from all the other arts. Let us suppose, for the sake of example, that an incomparable artist in stained glass were asked to design seven church windows symbolically representing the periods of day and night in connection with seven great moods of man. He would

\* From LUNACY AND LETTERS, Copyright Dorothy Collins 1958. Published by Sheed and Ward, Inc., New York.

conceive the first window in white, chequered faintly with a pale gold and rose, expressing the young austerity of the dawn, its pure passions, and its innocent colours. He would fill the second pane with gold, darkening or rather enriching itself, into brown towards the edges, expressing the masculinity of things, the triumph and even the insolence of the sun. The third would be of a dense blue, that blue of midday which in the very tropical intensity of summer has a resemblance to the midnight darkness. The fourth would be full of a certain pale purple of afternoon, a purple tinged with silver which suggests more completely than any earthly thing the conception of resignation and order, an endless ending of things. The fifth would be the window of the sunset, stricken on fire with crimson and gold, flamboyant and full of the war of the heavens at that moment when the sun seems to turn to bay. The sixth would be of green and silver, and typify the sad and universal pardon which lingers in the sky after the fall of the sun. The seventh would, by the lawful operation of a good design, be utterly black and brooding, a drift of dark clouds, declaring powerfully the final divinity of darkness. It would seem a fine and artistic ending. Nevertheless, one condemning and decisive thing would have to be said. The last window with its dome of utter darkness, would not be a good window; it would not be a window at all. For behind all designs for specific windows stands eternally the essential idea of a window; and the essential idea of a window is a thing which admits light. A dark window cannot be a good window, though it may be an excellent picture. We should have to sacrifice the internally artistic character of the seventh design to the fact that when externally considered, when taken in connection with the peculiar objects of the work concerned, it was inartistic. A hundred examples of the same thing might be taken. An architect might design four or five pillars in a church so that they should allegorically express four or five typical virtues. The pillar which represented Fortitude might be a solid and splendid piece of work, based on broad roots like an oak-tree and capitolled with the horns of a bull. The pillar which typified Purity might be a pure marble column, carved here and there with a lily; the pillar depicting Charity might be many-sided and many-faced, graven with the wings and faces of cherubim. All these, however different, might be thoroughly artistic. But if the architect made a pillar of Humility, and made it slightly bent, or even very slender, it would be a bad pillar. For behind all designs for specific pillars stands eternally the essential idea of a pillar, that it is a thing which is capable of supporting weight. A wavering pillar cannot be a good pillar, though it may be an excellent drawing-book curve. There is an almost infinite variety of meanings which can be expressed by windows and pillars and all other forms of artistic workmanship—but they have their indwelling limitations. They cannot express darkness in a window or a surrender in a column of stone.

These entirely elementary principles of art are quite equally applicable to the great institutions which men have set up in human society—the Church, the Court of Justice, the Pageant, the Council, the Theatre. Each of these has at the back of it an emotion, an idea. Each of them may play a thousand tricks, but they must not violate this idea. What is it, for example, which gives us a vague feeling of discontent in listening to the individual who is commonly called the popular preacher? He is logical, eloquent, scientific, convincing, no one cares what. The essential and damning point is that he is not—in the true and forcible meaning of the phrase—he is not in church. A church represents a certain feeling which is an

integral and perfectly natural part of an ordinary man—the feeling of sanctity. We do not care in the least in comparison which rites or what dogmas the church professes; we do care very much that it should be in a church. The instant it is turned into a moral lecture room, that instant we desert it and walk into the nearest Roman Catholic or Salvation Army chapel. A church is nothing if it is not a sanctity. A theatre is nothing if it is not a festival.

This is the great truth towards which the defeated and derided remnant of the anti-Ibsenites seems to me to be stumbling and struggling. A play may be as bitter as death, or as sweet as sugar-candy, it matters nothing—but a play must be a treat. It must be something which a mob of Greek savages, a thousand years ago, might, in some ruder form, have uttered passionately in praise of the passionate god of wine. The moment we begin to talk about a theatre or a theatrical entertainment as “dissecting life,” as a “moral analysis,” as an “application of the scalpel”; the moment, in short, that we talk of it as if it were a lecture, that moment we lose our hold on the thin thread of its essential nature. In that moment we are talking of bent pillars symbolical of humility; in that moment we are talking of popular preachers who preach as if they were not in church. A book of poems we keep on our shelves; its rhymes come to us again and again in the house and garden with an enchanting monotony. A book of prose we keep on our shelves; its problems we hold in the balance; we read it and re-read it, differ from it, and perhaps ultimately agree with it. But a play is nothing if it is not sensational; it is nothing if we do not go to it with the utter asceticism of children, ready to wait an hour outside the pit. It is nothing if it does not leave behind in our heads a trail of glory through the darkness of the return home, and become, like existence itself, a thing we dare not even fancy ourselves as having missed.

## MARLOWE'S SOLAR SYMBOLISM

BY JOHN J. McALEER

Like his contemporary, George Chapman, Christopher Marlowe had the mentality of an emblem writer. Although he rarely states directly his emblematical intention, many of the images Marlowe uses in his plays are actual emblems. These images radiate from some central idea and depend upon their relation to this idea for their coherence. Though the truth of this fact may be demonstrated by following any of several symbol-strains through Marlowe's works, the solar image offers itself as a particularly felicitous image for use in this undertaking.

While several more or less distinct threads of solar symbolism run through Marlowe's works, most of these threads find unity in a tightly-woven, breathtaking tapestry. In fact, the organic nature of this image-motif does not differ materially from play to play. Thus, Marlowe's solar symbolism is organic precisely in the sense that the individual strings of a harp, when played together, are organic. Furthermore, many cognate images in Marlowe's works present themselves with such insistence, that one cannot fail to suspect that solar symbolism forms only a part of an image-strain which extends, root and fiber, into the man as well as the artist. There can be little reason to doubt that the poet's frequent concern with images of fire, heat, and light, as well as with curiously antithetical images of darkness and arctic frigidity, should be probed also, if the reader is to be brought entirely into sympathy with the mind and art of Christopher Marlowe.

By the very manner in which the facts align themselves, positive assurance is given that Marlowe wrought his solar symbols with full awareness of the contribution they would make to the harmonic unity of his work. There is reason to believe further that his predilection for iterative solar images shadows forth an aspect of his mind which we only imperfectly comprehend. To understand the poet and the complete meaning of his solar symbolism, then, we must also be prepared to deal with this further matter. Hence, while the province of this account is such as to exclude exploration of a number of related image-themes, the solar image itself will be dealt with initially as a poetic device consciously manipulated by the playwright to achieve his poetic and dramatic ends, and finally, as a sounding board through which he communicates to us hidden aspects of a struggle going on within himself.

The most characteristic feature of Marlowe's solar imagery is his use of the sun to symbolize kingship. In fact his use of this device is so considerable, that it offers itself immediately as the undeniable vantage point from which the entire pattern of his solar symbolism must be viewed. While intrinsically the device has nothing extraordinary to recommend it, Marlowe's specialized use of it does change it into something extraordinary, converting it from a hackneyed figure

*John J. McAleer is a member of the English staff in the Graduate School, Boston College. His articles have appeared in The Explicator, The American Bard, Drama Critique, The New Yorker and his reviews in the Boston Pilot and America.*

of speech into an efficient poetic implement. Before considering it, however, let us reflect briefly on the extensive tradition which prepares our minds to acknowledge the sun-king emblem as an inevitable symbol in the hands of a poet who is concerned with the subject of royal power.

Identification of royal power with the solar eminence reaches back into the earliest memories of man's history. Originally, idolatry of the sun and of its terrestrial analogue, fire, was a simple recognition of the beneficent qualities of light and heat. J. B. Hanny remarks: "All the great nations—China, India, Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt, Greece, and Rome—reached the higher plane of natural religion, and held the sun to be the benevolent god, the bringer of all blessings."<sup>1</sup> Since, as Hocart informs us, the earliest known religion was a belief in the divinity of kings,"<sup>2</sup> it should follow logically that sun and king should come to share a common identity. Such an identification was, in fact, made. Hocart says, "the dogma that the king is the sun-god . . . found . . . in Egypt, Asia Minor, India, Tahiti, Peru . . . we are forced to conclude, is an original feature of the religion of divine kings."<sup>3</sup>

The identification of monarch and sun in Egypt offers us a classic example of the development of this tradition. From the earliest times, Heliopolis was the most important seat of solar worship in Egypt. The first fixed date in history is 4241 B.C., the year in which the solar calendar was introduced into the Delta by the Heliopolitan priesthood. For about fifteen hundred years, the priest-astronomers of Heliopolis were concerned with the study of the sun. Since the position of the Heliopolitan hierarchy was second in importance only to the monarchy, the Heliopolitan priesthood, as might be suspected, with the aid of carefully prepared propaganda eventually seized power, and three sons conceived of a priestess by Ra, the supreme sun-god, ascended to the throne of Egypt. The Pharaoh thus became son of the sun, and, at the same time, the sun-god incarnate on earth.<sup>4</sup>

There is evidence to indicate that the ancient inhabitants of Britain also venerated a sun-god. Stonehenge, for example, is known to be a portion of a Druid temple, dedicated to solar worship. It may be recalled, too, that in the Saxon period an ordinary comb was a well-recognized grave gift. "Comb," presumably from its rays, meant *ac om be* or "Great Sun Father." The custom apparently died hard, for Bayley tells us that when the body of St. Cuthbert was disinterred at Durham Cathedral in the eighteenth century, there was found upon his breast a plain, simple, Saxon comb of ivory.<sup>5</sup> While we do not know whether sun-king traditions developed in England as they did in other countries, we can, in any case, be sure that they were introduced into the island with the advent of Christianity. The sun-king image is found in the Bible, of course, and as is well known, Christ himself very early in Christian times, succeeded in sublimated form to many of the attributes of the sun-god. It is worth noting that Richard II,

<sup>1</sup> J. B. Hanny, *Sex Symbolism in Religion* (London, 1922), I, 176.

<sup>2</sup> G. N. Hocart, *Ancient Pagan and Modern Christian Symbolism* (London, 1902), p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Rugg-Gunn, *Osiris and Odin* (London, 1940), pp. 156-157.

<sup>5</sup> Harold Bayley, *The Lost Language of Symbolism* (London, 1912), II, 180.



who acceded to the throne in 1377, apparently took "the sun emerging from a cloud" as a personal emblem, for it "is actually one of the three badges embroidered upon the robes of his effigy in Westminster Abbey."<sup>6</sup> J. Dover Wilson has suggested that since "for Shakespeare the sun stood in general as the symbol of royal majesty,"<sup>7</sup> he might have taken his hint from this effigy, especially since sun-king imagery in *Richard II* is of such prominence as to be readily distinguishable to most readers of the play.

Just as it is difficult to determine to what extent sun and kingship were identified in early England, so too, it is not easy to say whether the notion of kingship, emblemized as the sun, passed into Marlowe's mind from indigenous or continental sources. One must suppose the latter contingency more probable, although some case surely can be made out for a domestic origin. For example, several English dramatic works written before Marlowe's day make use of the device, among them *The Magi*, *Herod*, and *the Slaughter of the Innocents*, *Gorboduc*, and *Campaspe*.<sup>8</sup> All of these dramatic works could conceivably have been direct influences acting on the poet.

Had he not done so before, Marlowe certainly encountered the notion of kingship symbolized as the sun in the first book of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, which the playwright translated into English at the outset of his career. There we find Caesar eulogized in Marlowe's translation, with the lines:

Receive with shouts; where thou wilt raigne as King,  
Or mount the sunnes plume-bearing charriot,  
And with bright restles fire compasse the earth . . .  
What God it pleases thee be . . .  
If any one part of vast heaven thou swayest,  
The burdened axes with thy force will blend;  
The midst is best; that place is pure, and bright,  
There Caesar may'st thou shine and no cloud dim thee. . . .<sup>9</sup>

When Marlowe wrote *Dido*, his first play, and found himself dealing with a hero sired by a goddess and destined for kingship, the image-motif of the sun-king again found its way into his mind. Both Venus and Dido speak of the fledgling king as possessed of sun-like qualities. Venus assures the seas that they would be proud to bear her son: "Had not the heavens conceav'd with hel-borne clowdes, / Valid his resplendant glorie from your view" (*Works*, 395; ll. 125-126). And again she speaks of him as one: "Whose armed soule alreadie on the sea, / Darts forth her light on Lavinias shoare" (*Works*, 416; ll. 893-894). Dido sighs upon his golden hair and glistening eyes, and eulogizes him as

The man that I doe eye where ere I am,  
Whose amorous face like *Pean* sparkles fire,  
When as he buts his beames on Floras bed. . . .  
And I must perish in his burning armes. . . .

(*Works*, 419; ll. 1013-1017.)

<sup>6</sup> J. Dover Wilson (ed.), *King Richard II* (Cambridge, 1939), pp. xii-xiii.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Quincy Adams, *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas* (Cambridge, 1924), p. 59, ll. 507-508; p. 511, ll. 330-331; p. 611, ll. 14-15.

<sup>9</sup> C. F. Tucker Brooke (ed.), *The Works of Christopher Marlowe* (Oxford, 1910), p. 649, ll. 47-59.

In *Tamburlaine*, we see the image of the sun-king spring fully armed from the brain of Marlowe. The image is introduced early in Part One and continued throughout, with infinite variation, to the very end of Part Two. Significantly, it is Tamburlaine himself, the "monarch of the East," who first confers the tribute of sun-kingship upon his own royal majesty. He states:

I am a Lord . . .  
 And meanes to be a terrour to the world,  
 Measuring the limits of his Emperie  
 By East and West, as Phoebus doth his course. . . .  
 (Works, 15; ll. 230-236.)

In addition to putting himself on a par with the sun, Tamburlaine, on occasion, is wont to exalt himself above the sun. He professes to be more enduring than it is. Glorifying in his affected invincibility, he boasts: "Sooner shall the Sun fall from his Spheare,/Than Tamburlaine be slaine or overcome" (Works, 18; ll. 371-372). At the death of Zenocrate, he rants: "And with the cannon breake the frame of heaven,/Batter the shining pallace of the Sun . . ./For amorous *Love* hath snatcht my love from hence . . ." (Works, 95; ll. 3073-3075). And again, at his own illness: "Theridamas, haste to the court of *Love*,/Wil him to send Apollo hether straight,/To cure me, or Ile fetch him downe my selfe" (Works, 133; ll. 4453-4455). In power-intoxicated moments, Tamburlaine, contrasting his own radiance to that of the sun, would shrivel the sun to a pallid orange:

Smile Stars that raig'n'd at my nativity:  
 And dim the brightnesse of their neighbor lamps,  
 Disdaine to borrow light of Cynthia,  
 For I the chieftest Lamp of all the earth,  
 First rising in the East with milde aspect,  
 But fixed now in the Meridian line,  
 Will send up fire to your turning Spheares,  
 And cause the Sun to borrowe light of you.  
 (Works, 48; ll. 1477-1484.)

Among the ancients, the solar nature of the king was apt to be understood very literally by his subjects. Hocart notes that the Egyptians, to protect their eyes against the glare of his solar radiance, held out their hands before their faces when saluting the king. It is perhaps such a picture that Guise sees in his mind's eye, when, aspiring to the sunlike eminence of kingship, he muses: "A royall seate, a scepter and a crowne:/That those which doe beholde, they may become/As men that stand and gase against the Sunn" (Works, 449; ll. 162-164). Paradoxically, the eyes of the sun-king seem to be the seat of his deadly radiance. As Dido is smitten by the glistening eyes of Aeneas, and as Ovid says of the woman who reigns in his heart, "and by thine eyes whose radiance burnes mine out" (Works, 623; l. 48), so the eyes of Tamburlaine "shine as Comets" and terrify his foes. Of them Menaphon awesomely observes: "His piercing instruments of sight:/Whose fiery cyrcles beare encompassed/A heaven of heavenly bodies in their Spheares . . ." (Works, 21; ll. 468-470). We are reminded of the lines in *Edward III*: "The king will in his glory hide thy shame;/And those that gaze on him to find out thee/Will lose their eyesight, looking in the sun."<sup>10</sup> And we

<sup>10</sup> G. C. Moore Smith (ed.), *Edward the Third* (London, 1897), p. 31, ll. 398-400.

think, also, of the opening lines of *Henry VI*, Part One:

England ne'er had a king until his time.  
Virtue he had, deserving to command;  
His brandish'd sword did blind men with his beams;  
His arms spread wider than a dragon's wings;  
His sparkling eyes, replete with wrathful fire,  
More dazzled and drove back his enemies  
Than midday sun fierce bent against their faces.<sup>11</sup>

Like Alexander, whom a sun-conscious Emperor describes to Faustus as, "Chiefe spectacle of the worldes preheminance,/The bright shining of whose glorious actes/Lightens the world with his reflecting beames . . ." (*Works*, 180; ll. 1036-1038), Tamburlaine is often described as co-equal with the sun. The lyric softness of Zenocrate's rare attempt to compare him with the sun, "As looks the sun through Nilus flowing stream,/Or when the morning holds him in her armes,/So lookes my lordly love, faire *Tamburlaine* . . ." (*Works*, 36; ll. 1032-1034), contrasts startlingly with the shepherd's own fierce declarations. We recall: "And now ye cankered curres of *Asia*,/That will not see the strength of *Tamburlaine*,/Although it shines as brightly as the Sun,/Now you shal feelee the strength of *Tamburlaine* . . ." (*Works*, 115; ll. 3806-3809). Even in his final illness he still espouses tenaciously co-equality with the sun. His enemies having fled at the sight of him, he jeers: "Thus are the villaines, cowards fled for feare,/Like Summer vapours, vanisht by the Sun . . ." (*Works*, 134; ll. 4508-4509). As death draws near, the awareness of his actual inferiority to the sun, which overtakes Tamburlaine, the realization that it is merely a part which he has been playing well, is somewhat provided for in the physical symbols which he has gathered about him to grace his role as sun-king. Twice his armor is mentioned. Once he says: "And with our Sun-bright armour as we march,/Weel chase the Stars from heaven, and dim their eies/That stand and muse at our admyred armes" (*Works*, 25; ll. 620-623). And again: "Thorow the streets with troops of conquered kings,/He ride in golden armour like the Sun . . ." (*Works*, 123; ll. 4093-4094). It is Amyras, however, who looks upon a kingly crown from the viewpoint of this image-motif. He says: "Now in their glories shine the golden crownes/Of these proud Turks, much like so many suns/That halfe dismay the maiesty of heaven . . ." (*Works*, 112; ll. 3674-3676). With this passage we may recall Shakespeare's York:

And this fell tempest shall not cease to rage  
Until the golden circuit, on my head,  
Like to the glorious sun's transparent beams,  
Do calm the fury of this man-bred flaw.<sup>12</sup>

And the assurance of Amasias made to Callapine:

Feare not, my Lord, I see great *Mahomet*  
Clothed in purple clowdes, and on his head

<sup>11</sup> George Lyman Kittredge (ed.), *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (Boston, 1936), p. 677, ll. 8-14.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 724, ll. 351-354.

A Chaplet brighter than *Apollo*s crowne,  
Marching about the ayer with armed men . . .  
(*Works*, 131; ll. 4364-4367.)

The great symbol of the office of sun-kingship, however, is the chariot. The story of Phaeton, who perished striving to fulfill his wish to drive the chariot of Phoebus, his father, was told as early as Hesiod. Marlowe probably first encountered it in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In any case, the tale fascinated him and he made extensive use of it throughout his plays. Both Tamburlaine and Faustus play the part of Phaeton with great energy. Faustus is at the height of his glory as "from East to West his Dragons swiftly glide" (*Works*, 197; l. 837), and Tamburlaine, with characteristic verbosity, is a super-Phaeton as he speaks to the "pampered lades of Asia":

The horse that guide the golden cie of heaven,  
And blow the morning from their nosterils,  
Are not so honoured in their Governour,  
As you (ye slaves) in mighty *Tamburlaine*.  
(*Works*, 120; ll. 3986-3989.)

Beside this vaunt, the unrealized boast of Guise seems pallid indeed: "So will I triumph over this wanton King, / And he shall follow my proud Chariots wheelles" (*Works*, 474; ll. 990-991).

It is with a growing sense of human frailty, however, that Tamburlaine observes:

Then in my coach like Saturnes royal son,  
Mounted his shining chariot, gilt with fire . . .  
So will I ride through Samarcanda streets,  
Until my soule dissevered from this flesh,  
Shall mount the milk-white way and meet him there.  
(*Works*, 123; ll. 4104-4111.)

In the closing lines of *Tamburlaine*, Part Two, the tyrant's words reveal that, to him, his chariot, like his armor, has been a symbol of his sun-kingship. And in his very recognition of this fact, he comes, at last, to the realization that it is but one of the trappings of a carefully constructed legend which ornaments a man who is, after all, as mortal as other men. In the young Ascanius, Jupiter saw one who would succeed to the eminence of his sun-king father, for he remarked of the boy:

But bright Ascanius, beauties better worke,  
Who with the Sunne devides one radiant shape,  
Shall build his throne amidst those starrie towers,  
That earth-borne *Atlas* groning underprops . . .  
(*Works*, 195; ll. 96-99.)

But Tamburlaine, lacking the assurances which divine omniscience alone can give, must merely leave to his sons the symbols of a legend together with advice for perpetuating it. A self-made sun, he must say to his heirs:

Looke here my boies, see what a world of ground

Lies westward from the midst of *Cancers* line,  
 Unto the rising of this earthly globe,  
 Whereas the Sun declining from our sight,  
 Begins the day without Antypodes:  
 And shall I died, and this unconquered?

(*Works*, 135; ll. 4538-4543.)

There is no choice. If his sun is to rise again, it must be through his children. We shall remember that Jung, writing on the sun-hero, observes:

As the sun, guided by its own internal laws, ascends from morn til noon, and passing beyond the noon descends toward evening, leaving behind its splendor, and then sinks completely into the all enveloping night, thus, too, does mankind follow his course according to immutable laws, and also sinks, after his course is completed, into night, in order to rise again in the morning to a new circle in his children.<sup>13</sup>

Tamburlaine must put before his children the most visible symbols of his kingship, and say, "mount my royall chariot of estate, / That I may see thee crown'd before I die" (*Works*, 136; ll. 4571-4572). The successful sun-king, they are told, must believe himself a Phoebus, not a Phaeton, and rule not by pride but by strength:

So, raigne my sonne, scourge and controlle those slaves  
 Guiding thy chariot with thy Fathers hand.  
 As precious is the charge thou undertak'st  
 As that which *Clymenes* brainsicke soone did guide,  
 When wandring *Phoebus* Ivory cheeks were scortcht  
 And all the earth like *Aetna* breathing fire:  
 Be warn'd by him, then learne with awful cie  
 To sway a throane as dangerous as his:  
 For if thy body thrive not full of thoughtes  
 As pure and fiery as *Phyfeus* beames,  
 The nature of these proud rebelling Iades  
 Wil take occasion by the slenderest haire,  
 And draw thee peecemeale like *Hyppolitus*,  
 Through rocks more steepe and sharp than Caspian cliftes.  
 The nature of thy chariot wil not beare  
 A guide of baser temper than my selfe,  
 More then heavens coach, the pride of *Phaeton*. . .

(*Works*, 137-138; ll. 4621-4637.)

But, as Ovid tells us, Phoebus cannot bestow this gift on Phaeton, nor may even Jupiter drive his chariot. The fate of Richard II comes to mind: "Down, down I come, like / glist'ring Phaeton: / Wanting the manage of unruly jades. . ." <sup>14</sup> And on this passage Reyher observes: "*Descende ainsi, c'est descendre les marches du trone: c'est l'abdication, la decheance. Il n'a pas su regner; le pouvoir royal, le char du soleil, lui a echappe et passe en des mains plus fermes. Desillusion amere, il se croyait Phebus, il n'est que Phaeton.*" <sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> C. G. Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious* (New York, 1917), p. 191.

<sup>14</sup> Wilson, p. 62, ll. 178-179.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

The sun-king imagery of *Tamburlaine* in its chaotic effusiveness and unpredictability offers evidence of the same disregard for discipline which marks the dramatic structure of both *Tamburlaine* plays. But the sun-king imagery of *Edward II* is of noticeably different order. While sun-king imagery in *Tamburlaine*, Parts One and Two, may certainly be said to add a further meaning to the immediate meaning of what is happening on the stage, and to be, in that sense, true dramatic imagery, it is only in *Edward II* that we find sun-king imagery placed under the rigid discipline of following the action of the play, with perfect appropriateness, from beginning to end.

Writing of Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, Caroline Spurgeon says:

The thought of the king as sun naturally carries with it the idea of favorites of a prince ripening under his beams, as when Prince John, reproving York for his leadership of the rebels, points out that the man who 'sits within a monarch's heart/And ripens in the sunshine of his favour,' if he sets out to abuse the king's trust, may do untold mischief 'in shadow of such greatness.'<sup>16</sup>

This motif is developed with considerable care by Marlowe throughout the first half of *Edward II*. In the opening passage, Gaveston recognizes that he is a favored being who basks beneath the rays of a particularly benevolent sun: "What neede the artick people love star-light,/To whom the sunne shines both by day and night?" (*Works*, 314; ll. 16-17). Warwick sees Gaveston in a more powerful role, when he observes subsequently: "Ignoble vassaile that like *Phaeton*,/Aspir'st unto the guidance of the sunne" (*Works*, 322; ll. 311-312). The Barons look upon Spencer not merely as one who is aspiring to govern the sun, but as a power that shuts off the sun's radiance. Edward is ordered to "remooove/This Spencer, as a putrifying branche,/That deads the royall vine, whose golden leaves/Empale your princelie head, your diadem,/Whose brightnes such pernicious upstarts dim . . ." (*Works*, 352; ll. 1470-1474). But Edward, blind to his faults, is blind also to the shrouding mists bedimming his kingship. Significantly he remarks earlier to Lancaster: "As grose vapours perish by the sunne,/Even so let hatred with thy soveraignes smile . . ." (*Works*, 330; ll. 638-639). And, again, to Spencer: "*Spencer*, I heere create thee earle of Wilshire,/And daily will enrich thee with our favour,/That as the sun-shine shall reflect ore thee . . ." (*Works*, 349; ll. 1356-1358).

It is with an ironic appeal to the sun to hasten from the sky, a device employed by Shakespeare later in a strikingly similar passage, that Edward reaches his highest power, and hastens on his night:

Gallop apace bright Phoebus through the skie,  
And duskie night, in rustic iron carre,  
Betweene you both, shorten the time I pray,  
That I may see that most desired day,  
When we may meet these traitors in the field.

(*Works*, 360; ll. 1738-1742.)

<sup>16</sup> Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery* (New York, 1936), p. 237.



He is ready to face his enemies. Their subsequent defeat makes inevitable the events which follow. From this point on, in the play, all the sun-king imagery shifts in emphasis from the image of a sun rising and shining serenely, to a sun dropping into lasting eclipse, its light withdrawn from those it shined upon, and its radiance itself bedimmed. Says Baldwin of Edward: "We are deprived of the sunshine of our life" (*Works*, 366; l. 1973). Edward himself can reflect: "But what are kings, when regiment is gone,/But perfect shadows in a sunshine day?" (*Works*, 367; ll. 2012-2013). He hopes for the perpetuation of his day, but almost at once despairs:

Continue ever thou celestiall sunne,  
 Let never silent night possesse this clime,  
 Stand still you watches of the element,  
 All times and seasons rest you at a stay,  
 That *Edward* may be still faire England's king:  
 But dayes bright beames dooth vanish fast away,  
 And needes I must resigne my wished crowne.

(*Works*, 368; ll. 2050-2056.)

In *Lochrine*, we encounter the lines: "When as the morning shows his cheerful face,/And Lucifer, mounted upon his steed,/Brings in the chariot of the golden sun. . . ." <sup>17</sup> But Edward, in his downcast state, is not visited by Lucifer, but by Lightborne, a Lucifer after the fall. When he exclaims, "Whose there, what light is that, wherefore comes thou?" (*Works*, 380; l. 2490). He addresses himself not to the dawn of a new hope, but to Lightborne, who brings to him, not the fire of a new kingship, but a fiery death. Edward, unlike Tamburlaine, who is a sun-king by force rather than right, perishes nonetheless, as so most of Marlowe's sun-kings, symbolically consumed in the fire which his majesty was thought to generate of itself.

Like Edward, Bajazeth is a sun-king whose glorious day pales into the dark night of defeat. When Bajazeth is imprisoned in a cage, his wife, Zabina, protests that "sun-bright Pallaces," should have been prepared for him and not such a prison as that which Tamburlaine has provided. And at his death, she rants, "The Sun was downe" (*Works*, 65; l. 2094).

Enjoying, like the sun-king imagery, a certain organic unity throughout the works of Marlowe is its obverse, the "sun-queen image." Zenocrate, of course, suggests herself to us as the ideal sun-queen in Marlowe's works, since she is the spouse of a sun-king and enjoys a relationship with him which, unlike that of Isabella and Edward, and that of Dido and Aeneas, is unmarred by perfidiousness. In both Part One and Part Two of *Tamburlaine*, the tyrant himself describes Zenocrate as one whose looks can banish the clouds from heaven. And at her demise he articulates his sorrows in a high-flown and lengthy harangue:

Blacke is the beauty of the brightest day,  
 The golden balle of heavens eternal fire,  
 That danc'd with glorie on the silver waves;

<sup>17</sup> William Hazlitt (ed.), *The Doubtful Plays of William Shakespeare* (London, 1918), p. 70, ll. 482-485.

Now wants the fewell that enflamde his beames  
 And all with faintnesse and for foule disgrace,  
 He bindes his temples with a frowning cloude,  
 Ready to darken earth with endlesse night:  
*Zenocrate* that gave him light and life  
 Whose eies shot fire from their Ivory bowers,  
 And tempered every soule with lively heat,  
 Now by the malice of the angry Skies,  
 Whose iealousie admits no second Mate,  
 Drawes in the comfort of her latest breath  
 All dasled with the hellish miste of death.  
 Now walk the angels on the walles of heaven,  
 As Centinels to warne th' immortall soules,  
 To entertaîne devine *Zenocrate*.

(*Works*, 93; ll. 2969-2985.)

On the same note, Theridamus thrice compares Olympia to the sun and, indeed, upon her death observes:

Now Hell is fairer than *Elisian*,  
 A greater Lamp than that bright eie of heaven,  
 From whence the starres doo borrow all their light,  
 Wanders about the black circumference. . . .

(*Works*, 120; ll. 3968-3971.)

While Aeneas thinks his mother, Venus, is "the Sunnes bright Sister," and Ovid thrice identifies with the sun the woman who reigns in his heart, Hero is, next to Zenocrate, the Marlovian heroine most often compared to the sun. *Hero and Leander*, which both opens and closes with solar images, invariably sees Hero not merely as co-equal with the sun in radiance, but superior to it. We are told by the poet of "*Hero* the faire/Whom young Apollo courted for her haire,/And offered as a dower his burning throne,/Where she should sit for men to gaze upon" (*Works*, 493; ll. 5-8), a passage which brings to mind the somehow less provocative lines in *Daphnis and Chloe*: "Hir lockes dispersed on hir shoulders, in colour like the burnisht yellow of the finest gold, made her to appeare as one of the nymphs whom Iupiter erst favored, or Apollo with ardent flames whilom eagerly pursued."<sup>18</sup> Indeed, "So lovely faire was *Hero*, *Venus* Nun,/As nature wept, thinking she was undone" (*Works*, 493; ll. 45-46). And when she walked in the midst of others so radiantly bright that it seemed "as if another Phaeton had got/The guidance of the sunnes rich chariot" (*Works*, 494; ll. 101-102), we are told "but far above the loveliest *Hero* shin'd,/And stole away th'enchanted gazers mind . . ." (*Works*, 494; ll. 103-104). In this age, the device appears in *Lochrine*, William Browne's *Brittannia's Pastorals*, and Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*.<sup>19</sup> Clearly it was a common and obvious conceit. But seldom is it used with greater effectiveness than when it is used by Christopher Marlowe.

Marlowe, like Greene, Jonson, Drayton, Harvey, and other poets of the Renaissance had a competent knowledge of astrology. This knowledge is in evidence throughout his work but is especially apparent in *Tamburlaine* and

<sup>18</sup> Angel Day (trans.), *Daphnis and Chloe* (London, 1890), p. 20.

<sup>19</sup> Douglas Bush, *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry* (Minneapolis, 1932), pp. 173-174; W. L. Rawnick, *The Shepherd's Calendar* (London, 1930), p. 51, ll. 73-81.

*Faustus*. Since Marlowe undoubtedly was familiar with the heated treatises for and against astrology which appeared in the 1580's, and probably shared Nashe's laughter at Richard Harvey's serious attempts at astrology, we may find no difficulty in accepting D. C. Allen's contention that, while Marlowe made use of astrology in his plays, he shared the convictions of Shakespeare that "our remedies oft in ourselves do lie/Which we ascribe to heaven." Allen tells us, indeed:

To most authors of the English Renaissance, the science of astrology was a storehouse of rhetorical ornament. Sixteenth-century England produced no great astrological poets . . . but its poets had . . . liking for the astrological figure or allusion . . . Now the use of and astrological trope by a literary man does not prove that he believed in astrology; it does, however, suggest the milieu in which he lived and worked. The effectiveness of a literary ornament depends after all, on its intelligibility to readers, and the frequency with which one comes upon astrological references in the writings of Renaissance literary men . . . suggests that the Renaissance public was as familiar with the astrologer's theories and jargon as the modern public is with the methods and language of psychologists.<sup>20</sup>

At first, it seems perplexing that Marlowe should be described as a competent student of astrology when he so seldom employs the solar eminence in terms of astrology. But this neglect of the sun is not peculiar to Marlowe. According to Allen, "the writers knew a great deal about the moon, Saturn, Venus, Mars, and Jupiter; they refer less often to Mercury, and to the sun, although they regularly comment on the latter planet in a physical sense."<sup>21</sup> It seems probable that one reason why the sun was not used often, in an astrological sense, by Marlowe and his contemporaries, is that in Renaissance astrology the sun was recognized as a benign influence. A benign influence, of course, is not nearly so attractive or useful to the dramatist as a malignant one. Hence the sun, used as an astrological symbol, had but a conventional role to enact, a role really indistinguishable from that which it played in nature. Of one of the few instances when Marlowe uses the sun as an astrological device, Allen notes: "One remembers that Marlowe's Mycetes was born during a conjunction of Saturn and the moon and lacked the mitigating powers of Jupiter, Mercury, or the sun in his horoscope; for this reason he was weak and foolish and an easy prey to Tamburlaine."<sup>22</sup> We may recall also, these lines from Marlowe's translation of the *Pharsalias* "O Phoebus shouldst thou with thy rayes now singe/The fell Nemean beast, th' earth would be fired,/And heaven tormented with thy chafing heate,/But thy fiers hurt not . . ." (*Works* 633; ll. 654-657). Astrologically, then, the sun offered few possibilities to the dramatist. Professor Bush suggests the obvious alternative when he says, "The mythologizing of nature was well under way in the Elizabethan period. Phoebus, not Titan . . . was in constant demand."<sup>23</sup> With the aid of Phoebus and Phaeton, Icarus, Titan, and Apollo, Marlowe was able to gloss over the sun's lack of astrological appropriateness.

<sup>20</sup> Don Cameron Allen, *The Star-Crossed Renaissance* (Durham, 1941), p. 155; cf. also, Francis R. Johnson, *Astronomical Thought in Renaissance England* (Baltimore, 1937).

<sup>21</sup> Allen, p. 176.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

<sup>23</sup> Bush, p. 220.

Since the sun, then, could not be used readily in an astrological sense as a rhetorical ornament, if Marlowe makes any concession to its astrological nature, it is merely to recognize its benignity. Yet, as the giver of heat and light, it would in all probability merit this attention even if Marlowe knew nothing whatsoever of the role which it had been assigned in the annals of astrology. We must note, yet, that when Marlowe wishes to show a downward turn of fortune through the use of solar-imagery, he frequently achieves this effect by presenting us with a vision of the sun blotted out by clouds or some other obscuring element. This measure constitutes a subtracting of a benevolent influence and is, in effect, a way around the difficulties that astrology places in the way of the poet who wants to apply the sun to a malevolent use.

The shrouded-sun image occurs with astonishing persistence in Marlowe's works and is leavened through them with a consistency shared by no other scheme of solar imagery which he employs. Marlowe early uses the image of the sun plunged into hiding, in his translation of Book One of the *Pharsalia*. There he writes:

*Phoebe* having fild  
Her meeting hornes to match her brothers light,  
Strooke with th'earths suddaine shadow waxed pale,  
*Titan* himselfe throand in the midst of heaven,  
His burning chariot plung'd in sable cloudes,  
And whelm'd the world in darknesse, making men  
Dispaire of day, as did *Thiestes* towne,  
(*Mycenae*) *Phoebus* flying through the East. . . .  
(*Works*, 660; ll. 535-542.)

The image is pursued in Ovid's *Elegies*, with such lines as: "But we must part, when heav'n with black night lowers." Of *Dipsas* he tells us: "When she will, cloudes the darckned heav'n obscure, / When she will, day shines everywhere most pure" (*Works*, 569; ll. 9-10). Again we read: "Verses reduce the horned bloudy moone / And call the sunnes white horses backe at noone" (*Works*, 582; ll. 23-24). In *Dido* we see the device taking on dramatic force when Venus complains that the sea would never have molested the sun-king Aeneas "had not the heavens concev'd with hel-borne cloudes, / Vaild his resplendant glorie . . ." (*Works*, 396; ll. 125-126). Aeneas himself, describing the fall of Troy, declares:

The winds did drive huge billowes to the shoare,  
And heaven was darkned with tempestuous cloudes:  
Then he alleag'd the Gods would have them stay,  
And prophecied *Troy* should be overcome. . . .  
(*Works*, 494; ll. 434-437.)

The sudden storm which launches the first scene in the fourth Act of *Dido* is described by Iarbus in such a way as to recall the earlier picture of *Dipsas*:

I thinke some fell Inchantresse dwelleth here,  
That can call them forth when as she please,  
And dive into the blacke tempests treasure,  
When as she means to maske the world with clodwes.  
(*Works*, 420-421; ll. 1062-1065.)

The shrouded-sun image strain is used with particularly good effect in *Tamburlaine* Part Two. Speaking of impending slaughter in battle, Tamburlaine makes his vaunt: "The Sun unable to sustaine the sight,/Shall hide his head in *Thetis* watery lap . . ." (*Works*, 86; ll. 2737-2738). Guise's boast is recalled:

If ever sunne staine heaven with bloody cloudes,  
And made it look with terrour on the worlde:  
If ever day were turnde to ugly night,  
And night made semblance of the hue of hell,  
This day, this houre, this fatall night,  
Shall fully shew the fury of them all.

(*Works*, 447; ll. 58-65.)

Zenocrate, rather in the challenging idiom of her husband, urges him, as her own death approaches:

Live still my Lord, I let my soveraigne live,  
And sooner let the fiery Element  
Dissolve, and make your kingdom in the Sky,  
Than this base earth should shroud your majesty.

(*Works*, 94; ll. 3025-3028.)

Again we recall Guise, who also thought of himself as a sun-king: "Is Guises glory but a cloudy mist,/In sight and judgement of thy lustfull eye?" (*Works*, 465; ll. 692-693). Here, of course, it is the sun-king rather than the sun, which faces eclipse. The images, however, are interlocking.

Elsewhere, in *Tamburlaine* Part Two, the striking parallel which the tyrant draws between the death of Zenocrate and the shrouding of heaven's light is recalled in the lament of Theridamas at the death of Olympia, who, as has been noted, is, like Zenocrate, frequently compared to the sun:

Weepe heavens, and vanish into liquid teares,  
Fal starres that governe his nativity,  
And sommon al the shining lamps of heaven  
To cast their bootlesse fires to the earth,  
And shed their feble influence in the aire,  
Muffle your beauties with eternall cloudes. . . .

(*Works*, 131-132; ll. 4393-4398.)

But this passage, together with the words of Usumcasane, coming a few lines after, "Blush heaven to loose the honor of thy name . . ." (*Works*, 132; l. 4420), finds echo in *Locrine* in the words of Guendolen: "Blush heaven, blush sun, and hide thy shining beams;/Shadow thy radiant locks in gloomy clouds;/Deny thy cheerful light unto the world. . . ." <sup>24</sup>

While solar imagery generally plays a subordinate role in that drama which is concerned with dark, Machiavellian deeds, *The Jew of Malta*, it is worth noting that Barabas, in times of stress invokes the shrouding of the heavens, seeking a darkness that parallels the darkness of his deeds:

<sup>24</sup> Hazlitt, p. 97, ll. 1715-1717.

But I may curse the day,  
 Thy fatall birth-day, forlorne *Barabas*;  
 And henceforth wish for eternall night,  
 That clouds of darknesse may inclose my flesh,  
 And hide these extreme sorrowes from mine eyes. . . .  
 (*Works*, 252; ll. 424-428.)

Elsewhere he declares:

Oh thou that with a fiery pillar led'st  
 The sonnes of *Israel* through the dismall shades,  
 Light *Abrahams* off-spring; and direct the hand  
 of *Abigail* this night: or let the day  
 Turn to eternall darknesse after this. . . .  
 (*Works*, 258; ll. 651-655.)

And still another petition for the clouding of the heavens, but this time the petition of a lover, Don Lodowick, asks, "let the brightsome heavens be dim,/And Nature's beauty choake with stifeling clouds,/Then my faire *Abigail* should frowne on me" (*Works*, 270; ll. 1095-1098). The lament of Lodowick brings to mind *Una's* lament for the supposed death of *Red Crosse*, in the *Faerie Queen*:

Oh lightsome day, the mape of highest Ioue,  
 First made by him, mens wandring wayes to guyde. . . .  
 Henceforth thy hated face for ever hyde,  
 And shut up heavens windowes shyning wyde:  
 For earthly sight can nought but sorrow breed. . . .<sup>25</sup>

The shrouded sun is a common figure in *Hero and Leander*, also. At the beginning of the poem, after comparing *Hero* to the sun, the poet tells us, "since *Hero's* time, hath halfe the world beene blacke" (*Works*, 493; l. 50). The image reappears again, in variation:

The aire with sparkes of living fire was spangled,  
 And night deepe drencht in mystic *Acheron*  
 Heav'd up her head, and halfe the world upon  
 Breath'd darknesse forth (darke night is *Cupid's* day).  
 (*Works*, 46; ll. 188-191).

The only concessions made by Marlowe to darkness, as an acceptable condition, are those made out of consideration for *Cupid*. Even nature conspires for such blissful darkness, for lovers wish that dawn should never come. We read in *Hero and Leander*:

Now had the morne espy'de her lovers steeds,  
 Whereat she starts, puts on her purple weeds,  
 And red for anger, that she stayd so long,  
 All headlong throwes her selfe the clouds among. . . .  
 (*Works*, 506; ll. 87-90.)

But then see further:

<sup>25</sup> Edmund Spenser, *Poetical Works* (New York, 1878), p. 53.



And now the sunne that through th'orizon peepes,  
 As pitying these lovers, downeward creepes,  
 So that in silence of the cloudie night,  
 Though it was morning, did he take his flight.

(*Works*, 506; ll. 99-102.)

Such was the event that Ovid wistfully hoped for, when he wrote, in vain, to Aurora:

How oft wisht I, night would not give thee place,  
 Nor morning starres shynne thy uprising face.  
 How oft that either winde would breake thy coach,  
 Or steeds might fall forc'd with thick clouds approach.

(*Works*, 577; ll. 27-30.)

We are told of Hero:

And now she wisht this night were never done,  
 And sigh'd to thinke upon th'approaching sunne,  
 For much it greev'd her that the bright day-light  
 Should know the pleasure of this blessed night.

(*Works*, 105; ll. 301-304.)

But, even as the sun must go down on the glory of Tamburlaine, Edward, and Guise, and darkness close over those who would rival the sun's glory, so too, must the sun rise upon those whose realm is darkness. Barabas, who worked in darkness, must, at last, be exposed to the eyes of all men, trapped in the fiery fury of his own most hideous venture. And Leander, who has violated the priestess of Venus, must flee to his death when the sun of day casts itself over the hidden world of darkness. The plea of Spenser has heaven on its side:

And ye high heavens, the temple of the gods,  
 In which a thousand torches flaming bright  
 Do burn, that to us wretched earthly clods  
 In dreadful darkness lend desired light . . .  
 Pour out your blessings on us. . . .<sup>26</sup>

But, though Hero is the sun, with her lover she turned back to the darkness. But darkness could not exonerate her. Nor could the darkness endure. The sun would no sooner abdicate its sovereignty to a lover than to a sun-king. Before the omniscient sun all must retreat. In the last lines of *Hero and Leander*, the last Marlowe ever wrote, he tells us:

By this Apollos golden harpe began  
 To sound forth musicke to the *Ocean*,  
 Which watchfull *Hesperus* no sooner heard,  
 But he the day bright-bearing Car prepar'd,  
 And ran before, as Harbenger of light,  
 And with his flaring beames mockt ougly night,  
 Till she o'recome with anguish, shame, and rage,  
 Dang'd downe to hell her loathsome carriage.

(*Works*, 512; ll. 328-334.)

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 650.

Hero's radiance we are told, is the dawn that brought forth this day, but it is the radiance of a false dawn: "And round about the chamber this false morne/  
Brought foorth the day before the day was borne" (*Works*, 511 ll. 321-322). As her radiance led her to betray her vows, now in turn, it betrays her sinning. Well might the poet tell us that Hero "sigh's to thinke upon the'approaching sunne,/ For much it greev'd her that the bright-daylight/Should know the pleasure of this blessed night" (*Works*, 511; ll. 303-304).

No struggle which takes place in man's mind is more epic-making than that struggle which takes place when the mind turns from goodness and inclines toward evil. Through his solar imagery, for a time, Christopher Marlowe subliminally depicts for us a struggle between God and himself. Few men have ever so graphically depicted this struggle, since few men ever have had both the genius and the willingness to probe and reveal the first assaults of life on their ideals, even as these events were happening. The occurrence of such an event postulates conditions of youth, high creative genius, passionate desire to know truth, and a pure spirit from which to fall, alike co-existing in the same person. And in Marlowe, these conditions did co-exist.

In the mind of Christopher Marlowe, dramatist, a mind nurtured on Christian theology, God is emblemized as the sun, while the symbols of Phaeton and Icarus emblemize Lucifer, and in the larger sense, man's revolt against God. The image of the shrouded sun portrays God's displeasure at the revolt of the sinner and warning of retribution to follow if he does not end his transgressions. The melting or vapor images depict the distraught sinner's efforts to escape the consequences of his act without turning back to God. The inevitable death by fire is the obvious symbol of eternal damnation and punishment. In *Faustus*, Marlowe records the whole of this struggle for us, together with infinite refinements of it. Just as Wordsworth's *Prelude* tells us what "Tintern Abbey" has led us to suspect, so *Faustus* frames for us the full picture of the cataclysmic struggle that went on within Marlowe's soul. It is also a drama that provides us with the assurance that what Marlowe must have only imperfectly understood about himself when he wrote his earlier plays, was understood fully by him when he wrote *Faustus*. Yet, if Marlowe had never written a word of *Faustus*, it would still be possible to reconstruct the substance of Marlowe's struggle from the remainder of his works. Marlowe's raptures may be "all air and fire," as Drayton once said, but with what a difference!

The first book of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, as translated by Marlowe, offers us indication of Marlowe's early preoccupation with, though imperfect understanding of, the nature of the rising revolt against God's grace which was seething within him. He tells us:

The fates are envious, high seats quickly perish,  
Under great burdens fals are ever greevous;  
Roome was so great it could not beare it selfe:  
So when this worlds compounded union breaks,  
Time ends and to old *Chaos* all things turne;  
Confused stars shal meete, celestiaall fire  
Fleete on the flouds, the earth shoulder the sea,  
Affording it no shoare, and Phoebe's waine

Chace *Phoebus* and inrag'd affect his place,  
 And strive to shine by day, and ful of strife  
 Dissolve the engins of the broken world.  
 All great things crush themselves, such and the gods. . . .  
 (*Works*, 650; ll. 70-81.)

To challenge God His supremacy of heaven as did Phaeton and Icarus, as did Tamburlaine and Satan, cannot fail to bring destruction upon the challenger. The author of *Locrine* warns of this prospect, as Brutus is told:

But whatsoe'er the Fates determined have,  
 It lieth not in us to disannul;  
 And he that would annihilate their minds,  
 Soaring with Icarus too near the sun,  
 May catch a fall with young Bellerophon.<sup>27</sup>

Icarus and Phaeton are, in Marlowe's mind, equated with Satan. Marlowe tells us of Satan: "O by aspiring pride and insolence,/For which God threw him from the face of heaven" (*Works*, 155; ll. 303-304), and of Faustus: "swolne with cunning, of a selfe conceit,/His waxen wings did mount above his reach,/And melting heavens conspирe his overthrow" (*Works*, 146; ll. 20-22). There is no necessity for making a distinction among the sins of Faustus, Satan, Icarus, and Phaeton. In Marlowe's symbolism, Icarus and Phaeton are but the pagan equivalents of Satan. All others challenge God as Faustus challenges Him. For their presumption, all are thwarted and destroyed.

Dido's sins are two: passion and disobedience. To satisfy the lusts of her flesh, she would upturn the decree of heaven which requires that Aeneas depart from Carthage. She sees herself, however, triumphing over the will of the gods, a neo-Icarus harnessing heaven's wrath to her own purpose: "He frame me wings of waxe like Icarus,/And ore his ships will soare unto the Sunne,/ That they may melt and I fall in his armes" (*Works*, 436-437; ll. 1651-1653). But the sins of Dido are mitigated by the depth of her love, and she is destroyed not by God, but by her own hand. We may recall the lines in *Hero and Leander*:

Like as the sunne in a Dyiameter,  
 Fires and inflames objects remooved farre,  
 And heateth kindly, shining lat'rally;  
 So beautie, sweetly quickens when t'is ny,  
 But being separated and remooved,  
 Burnes where it cherisht, murders where it loved.  
 (*Works*, 507; ll. 123-128.)

While Edward, like Dido, must suffer the penalty of his passionate attachments, those who aspire to his radiance must reap the penalty of their rebellion. A resigned Icarus, Mortimer the younger, observes:

Base fortune, now I see, that in thy wheele  
 There is a point, to which when men aspire  
 They tumble hedlong downe: that point I touchte,  
 And seeing there was no place to mount up higher,  
 Why should I greeve at my declining fall?  
 (*Works*, 384; ll. 2627-2631.)

<sup>27</sup> Hazlitt, p. 60, ll. 57-61.

The more ambitious Guise sets the stage for his fall when he recklessly asserts:

That like I best that flies beyond my reach.  
Set me to scale the high Peramides,  
And thereon set the Diadem of Fraunce,  
Ile either rend it with my nayles to naught,  
Or mount the top with my aspiring winges,  
Although my downfall be the deepest hell.

(*Works*, 448; ll. 99-104.)

Although the prologue of *Faustus* identifies the hero of the play with Icarus, it is as a veritable Phaeton that he is described by Wagner:

Learned Faustus,  
To know the secrets of *Astronomy*,  
Graven in the booke of Ioves hie firmament  
Did mount himselfe to scale *Olympus* top,  
Being seated in a chariot burning bright,  
Drawne by the strength of yoky dragons neckes. . . .

(*Works*, 172; ll. 792-797.)

It is as a fallen Icarus, already suffering damnation, that Mephistophilus observes: "Now with the flames of ever-burning fire, / I'll wing my selfe . . ." (*Works*, 209; ll. 1005-1006); the fate, in a sense, of every would-be Icarus.

In a curious image, Leander seems to cast before himself the shadow of his own Icarian death in the sea when, with reckless eagerness to possess Hero, he cries:

Aye me . . . th'enamoured sunne,  
That now should shine on Thetis glassie bower,  
Descends upon my radiant Heroes tower.  
O that these tardie armes of mine were wings.

(*Works*, 509; ll. 202-205.)

The most curious of Marlowe's images to be considered in the solar image category is the melting or vapor image. In one sense in which Marlowe uses it, he perhaps had in mind the melting of the wings of Icarus which symbolizes the exhaustion of heaven's patience with the effronter, and the effronter's realization of his plight, articulated with expressions that declare his despair. The younger Spencer, deprived of the benevolent rays of the sovereign Edward, finds himself, like Icarus, with the wings that were sustaining him in his flight, stripped from him, and he laments, ranting like Barabas:

O is he gone! is noble *Edward* gone,  
Parted from hence, never to see us more!  
Rent sphere of heaven, and fier forsake thy orbe,  
Earth melt to ayre. . . .

(*Works*, 336; ll. 1967-1970.)

Before he despaired of hope, Faustus had petitioned:

You starres that raignd at my nativitie,

Whose influence hath allotted death and hel,  
 Now draw up Faustus like a foggy mist,  
 Into the intrailles of yon labring cloude,  
 That when you vomite foorth into the ayre,  
 My limbes may issue from your smoaky mouthes,  
 So that my soule may but ascend to heaven. . . .

(*Works*, 193; ll. 1443-1449.)

In his last extremity, he pleads: "O soule, be changde into little water drops,/ And fal into the Ocean, nere be found . . ." (*Works*, 194; ll. 1472-1473). In *Richard II*, the king laments: "O that I were a mockery king of snow,/ Standing before the sun of Bolingbroke,/ To melt myself away in water-drops."<sup>28</sup> It is scarcely surprising that Wilson believes the image was suggested to Shakespeare by a memory of the lines in *Faustus*.<sup>29</sup>

For Marlowe, fire was the great symbol of punishment and damnation even as the sun to him was the symbol of a just deity. Hell fire is, of course, the obvious symbol of damnation to be applied in *Faustus*. These lines—"I heard him shreeke and call aloud for helpe:/ at which selfe time the house seem'd all on fire . . ." (*Works*, 229; ll. 1488-1489) seems to indicate that Faustus has gone to the hell for which he had bargained. But as Phaeton is destroyed by fire from Jove's hand due to the ambition which carried him across the heavens in the sun's chariot, so too, most of Marlowe's heroes, who have challenged, each in his own way, the sun of heaven, i.e., the Supreme Being, either are destroyed by fire or designated for hell's flames. It is perhaps not without significance that Marlowe's last hero, Leander, who in other ways seems to break with the earlier pattern, was to experience not the fate of Phaeton, but that of Icarus. How Marlowe would have treated this scene we can only conjecture, since he died before it was finished. But we should not overlook the fact that the poem, as he left it, both begins and ends with resplendent passages of solar imagery.

The death of Dido, who stabs herself, and dying, flings herself into the flames of her funeral pyre, is but the first of a remarkable series of death scenes in the works of Marlowe in which hell or fire plays a part. In *Tamburlaine Part One*, Zabina, finding her husband has killed himself, cries prior to joining him in death: "Bring milk and fire, and my blood I bring him againe, teare me in peeces, give me the sword with a ball of wildefire upon it" (*Works*, 65; ll. 2091-2093). Tamburlaine himself, at the death of Zenocrate, avows that she who "gives light to Phoebus and the fixed stars,/ Whose absence makes the sun and Moone as darke/ As when opposde in one Diamiter" shall never be given to the flames (*Works*, 94; ll. 3018-3020). He has her body sealed up, as a quasi-sun, in a sheet of gold. And he vows her picture

will shed such influence in my campe,  
 As if Bellona, Goddess of the war  
 Threw naked swords and sulphur bals of fire,  
 Upon the heads of all our enemies.

(*Works*, 100; ll. 3229-3232.)

<sup>28</sup> Wilson, p. 76, ll. 260-262.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

The town that has had the ill-fortune to be the death-site of Zenocrate, consort of the sun-king, is burned to cinders by this source of fire as a tribute to her, but Zenocrate, all goodness, is denied to the flames. This tribute is echoed by Techelles when he says to Olympia, who falls heir to so many of Tamburlaine's sun tributes to Zenocrate:

Madam, sooner shall fire consume us both,  
Then scorcht a face so beautiful as this,  
In frame of which, Nature hath shewed more skill,  
Than when she gave eternall Chaos forme,  
Drawing from it the shining Lamps of heaven.

(*Works*, 106-107; ll. 3484-3488.)

Unlike Ovid, Tamburlaine never asks himself, "Or is my heate of minde, not of the skie?" (*Works*, 608; ll. 39). He played his role with such confidence in himself that the prospect of self-deception would never have suggested itself to him. It is entirely fitting, therefore, that this sun-king, who emulates the source of heat, and determines what may and may not perish in fire, should perish of fire himself—especially of an inward fire." For when Tamburlaine falls incurably ill, he is told by his physicians: "Your vaines are full of accidental heat,/Whereby the moisture of your blood is dried . . ." (*Works*, 133-134; ll. 4476-4477). We are told finally of Tamburlaine: "And heaven consum'd his choisest living fire." (*Works*, 138; l. 4644).

Barabas continues in the tradition of Marlowe's heroes by perishing in fire, the symbol of damnation for his sins. His last lament from the cauldron assures us of the fate that awaits him: "But now begins the extremity of heat/To pinch me with intolerable pangs:/Dye life, fly soule, tongue curse thy fill and dye" (*Works*, 305; ll. 2371-2373).

History relates that Edward II died a fiery death. While Marlowe circumspectly suppresses the circumstances of this death, the significance of the name of his executioner, Lightborne, may not be overlooked. Edward's words, as death approaches, remind us also, of the punishment due him for his sins, "I feel a hell of greefe"; words which echo the lament of the unfortunate Gaveston, "Is all my hope turnd to this hell of greefe?" (*Works*, 324; l. 412).

Standing over the body of the slain Guise, the King confers upon him the ultimate tribute: "Surchargde with guilt of thousand massacres,/Mounser of Loraine sinke away to hell" (*Works*, 475; ll. 1034-1035).

Thus perish the heroes of Christopher Marlowe. Seeking heaven in their hopes, they find only hell when their ambitious plans are brought to disaster.

Marlowe's solar symbols, examined individually, are enigmatic, examined collectively, they are emblematic, for then they reveal a richly complex pattern of meaning. And the drama we suspect as we correlate these images is the drama that Marlowe wrote when he wrote *Faustus*. There is small hope that we shall ever entirely understand the forces against which Marlowe struggled within himself, yet the immensity of his preoccupation with these forces is suggested in the astonishing manner in which they assert themselves throughout his entire



work in his solar imagery. It is peculiarly fitting that Marlowe should have chosen cosmic imagery to depict the vast inward disorder that troubled his genius. We do not know how that struggle would have been resolved had not Marlowe's life abruptly ended. But we may believe that, since the power of his genius was such as to be able to crystallize the great phases of that struggle in epic fashion, he would ultimately have won a victory within himself. His written word is indisputable as evidence that he tried to bring under restraint his own restive spirit with a zeal few men have shown. No man is tempted beyond his strength, but the genius of Marlowe made his temptations the temptations of Lucifer, and Phaeton, and Icarus. We do not understand one another's punishments, but to the great, the punishments of struggle are great. Marlowe preserved for mankind a unique record of that struggle as it occurred in the soul of one man. And, for us, Marlowe shines as brightly as Lucifer before his fall.

## ON OFF-BROADWAY

By BROTHER LUKE M. GRANDE, F.S.C.

Lugubrious voices of doom have been bemoaning, perhaps justly, the dreary state of Broadway theater this year: *Fiorello's* success may be attributed partly to New Yorkers' civic pride in their famous little mayor; *Sound of Music* gives audiences an opportunity to see Mary Martin and to weep joyously sentimental tears simultaneously; *Take Me Along*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, and *Gypsy* glide along with slick, glittering engineering and not a thought in a carload; *La Plume de Ma Tante*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Music Man*, and *West Side Story* have settled down as perennials of an almost past era; a half dozen other money-makers pulled in the summer trade without pounding the pulses or intruding to any great extent on thought. Even the claim of *The Best Man* (Gore Vidal's hit at the Morosco) to cerebral challenge is minimized by its topical subject matter—presidential electioneering, a sure thing this year.

To anyone who has analyzed historically the rise and decline of drama, the pattern is familiar. With the increase of production costs, risks must be obviated; and the surest box-office (attested by pre-sale tickets of the current successes: a case in point, the forthcoming Alan Jay Lerner-Frederick Lowe musical *Camelot*, by the *My Fair Lady*-team, could boast a \$400,000 pre-sale before a single line was written) demands stars and music and an established writer. Perhaps the economic villain is the real key to the past few seasons.

But while the dutiful crowds thronged out from Shubert's Alley every evening to discuss stars, elaborate dances, and decor, ideas that stir with their originality and energies that make failure pathetic were being poured out (every night except Monday) a few blocks north or a few blocks south of the Broadway theatres, on "off-Broadway." A few years ago a cartoon appeared with two timid matrons inquiring, "Can you direct us to off-Broadway?" The joke has lost much of its point, since off-Broadway theater has become the most interesting thing in contemporary drama, and more and more members of the audience now know where it is to be found. Here formulae are forbidden and the resulting excitement is not surprising; for only here are expenses low enough to warrent the experimentation that gives rise to stimulating theater.

On the other hand, unseasoned actors, cobwebs on the wall, and a resurrection of William Butler Yeats do not add up necessarily to a rewarding evening either. Yet the very note of uncertainty as to the outcome of dramatic experimentation itself becomes part of an experience of discovery that makes serious students of the drama, as well as Second Avenue buffs, pall at the thought of returning to tired successes. Here, at least, is something still alive with the youth of its unknown actors and the daring of its fledgling dramatists and directors.

*Brother Luke is chairman of the English Department at Christian Brothers College, Memphis, Tennessee. His writings have appeared in Tennessee Studies in Literature, America, Catholic World, Information, Family Digest, Catholic Educator, Catholic School Journal, Today, and others.*

Recently, for example, a first night's preview at St. Mark's Place of a revival of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* brought to the stage the sensitive performance of Barbara Lloyd, who made almost plausible the possibility of anyone's loving that angry-young-man "Jimmy Porter." Before an audience of nine, the five young actors painfully mimicked their way through the English accents and the un-airconditioned evening, as though before a crowd up on Forty-Fourth Street. Jose Quintero's production of Tennessee Williams' *Camino Real*, which stumbled on Broadway, suddenly came alive again this year on a small stage with a small audience. And Stephen Vincent Benet's *John Brown's Body* (which is still to my mind rather a bore) won an extended run for the many who felt that its ideas and poetry gave more than adequate compensation for the current Broadway froth.

However, revivals were not the only attraction in the summer doldrums. Greenwich Village also had its musicals, each as different from every other and as charming in its own way, as the Broadway musicals seemed strangely alike and monotonous. To watch Eileen Brennan as "Little Mary Sunshine" mince out from the pasted painted flats and launch into "Look for a Sky of Blue" or "Coo Coo" is lovingly, if laughingly, to evoke every Victor Herbert or Rudolph Friml horror in musical comedy history; the "Colorado Love Call" duet by Rick Besoyan, the new young talent who wrote book, music, and lyrics, is a trenchant piece of satire on the old musical war horse; nor are there very many who felt less than guilty in finding such monstrous names as "In Izzenschnooken on the Lovely Essenzook Zee" or "Do You Ever Dream of Vienna" linked with lovely, nostalgic melodies.

Meanwhile, at the Theater de Lys, the Kurt Weil-Bertold Brecht excursion into serious cynicism, *The Threepenny Opera*, continued after five years to delightfully depress packed houses. The eighteenth century's John Gay would have reveled in the horribly fascinating Mrs. Peachum (Lu Leonard) or Pirate Jenny (Marion Brash), stolen from his *Beggar's Opera*. Even villain Macheath's last minute rescue from the gallows is introduced merely as a concession to modern romanticism; for life in these sloughs offers no reprieves—a bitter, yet engaging comment, after five years' success with "Mac, the Knife."

Over at the Jan Hus, Mary Ann Staffa, now on tour with the stylish American Savoyard singers of Gilbert and Sullivan, lilted through the summer repertory with a soprano sweetness that has made the company an almost permanent hit; and at the Sullivan Street Playhouse, Harvey Schmidt and Tom Jones musically revived a wild variation on the old Pyramus and Thisbe legend with *The Fantasticks*.

The same off-beat rhythm was evident in the more literary, if less successful at times, offerings of off-Broadway. In its first repertory presentation the "Theatre for the Swan," lodged at the Gate Theatre, put on a startling melange of one act plays: a modern morality play (e.e. cummings' *Santa Claus*); a modern mystery play (William Butler Yeats' *Calvary*); and an existentialist tract (Michel de Ghelderode's *Escorial*). Of the three, cummings' parable was most satisfactory: Harold Scott's subtly didactic Death teaches Santa Claus that love and understanding, as opposed to science and knowledge, comes only through suffering. While the nihilistic King of *Escorial* (treated most kindly of the three by critics

in general), crazed at the absurdity of a life in which death is possible, is perhaps most attuned to the age of Sartre and Camus, the initial note of hysteria upon which the one-act play opened precluded anything more than anti-climax at its end. The fault may have been director Stephen Quinto's, but it was difficult to share even the measured critical enthusiasm for this work. It would be kind to pass over the Yeats play with its embarrassing music and dance (which were either very stylized or very inept) —yet the presentation of even poorly done Yeats is in itself an event.

Why bother discussing three one-acters that failed? It was at the risk of launching a failure that the Living Theatre, another foray into repertory, has been able to rocket to success. Judith Malina and Julian Beck's first production (they have been experimenting for eleven years) of Gertrude Stein's *Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights* signaled a whole series of such *avant garde* works: T. S. Eliot's *Sweeney Agonistes*, Picasso's *Desire*, W. H. Auden's *Age of Anxiety*, and Strindberg's *The Spook Sonata*. For years this team has enlisted such artists as Jean Cocteau, John Cage, Paul Goodman, and Eric Bentley bringing, at last and without fanfare, a new and serious audience back to the theater.

To date its most interesting experiment has probably been Jack Gelber's *The Connection*, frighteningly acted by Darren Finnerty as the junkie Leach. The Pirandellesque involvement of audience and actors (a rare approach for an American dramatist with his tradition of the invisible-wall proscenium), can be almost scientifically measured in the course of the evening: in the jam sessions that occur during the first half of the evening, the audience, as yet not oriented to the lack of the invisible wall, remains a silent witness to what is happening "on stage"; however, during the second half, it responds to the jam sessions with a clapping that acknowledges the dissolving barriers. It is interesting to see a new theatrical conception taking shape before one's eyes, even if the total value of the experiment and the moral content of the themes are still matter for much debate. It is this kind of originality that is partly responsible for the growing crowds at the off-Broadway productions.

Over on Macdougall Street, the Provincetown Playhouse continues to offer Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*, that one actor *tour de force* which ironically counterpoints an old man's comments against his callow oversimplifications of thirty years previous, all by means of a tape recorder—an obvious device, but one that creates an eerie Proustian feeling of time recalled. Billed with it is the Edward Albee *Zoo Story*, an equally powerful exegesis of modern man's alienation from man: tottering upon the brink of expressionism, this one act drama begins in comedy and concludes in terror and tragedy.

Even more hotly debated than the ultimate value of Beckett's plays is that of those weird exhibitions of Eugene Ionesco, who could hope for no great success in Broadway production. Still *The Bald Soprano*, *The Lesson*, and *The Tenant* managed to maintain their precarious and fascinating footing for an extended run in experimental theater.

There is something refreshing even in a second-thought announcement that appears from time to time in the daily papers to the effect that a play will *not*

close, but will continue as long as the audience does: it is this spirit of improvisation or of hope that stirs one's sympathies in a world (surely not aesthetically inclined) dominated largely by cold calculation and predictable tabulations.

But if courage to grapple with ideas is the hallmark of the little theater, Jose Quintero's *Camino Real* (Tennessee Williams' most thought provoking work) and *The Balcony* (Jean Genet's introduction to American audiences), two problematic allegories, demonstrate a boldly brilliant direction as well. Audiences may have reeled away from these poetic puzzles only vaguely aware (or perhaps afraid) of what it all meant; but they left convinced that Quintero's cameo productions were well worth the experience. Visual images, fluid treatment of space, almost choreographic handling of movement combined to give a unity and significance to both plays which (at least in *Camino Real*) are lacking focus as scripts.

Not all off-Broadway productions this year were completely satisfying, of course. The "Chekhov" play *A Country Scandal* (translated and adapted by professor of French at Wesleyan University, Alex Szogi, working from the original Russian version and Italian and French adaptations), while playing to full houses, left many with the strange feeling that what Chekhov had written as tragedy was being presented as comedy. (Played straight, it would almost inevitably have become an impossible melodrama; however, I doubt strongly that the present version was a satisfactory solution.)

But the prize for the most successful of all of what might be classified as off-Broadway should go to the directors and producers of the summer's New York Shakespeare Festival held in Central Park. Their free offering of *King Henry V*, *Measure for Measure*, and *The Taming of the Shrew* were characterized by a youthful verve that punctured a pompous approach to these classics and generated from thousands of middle-class New Yorkers and tourists a spontaneous enthusiasm hardly duplicated by the more expensively dressed and esoterically directed Shakespeare of nearby Stratford, Connecticut.

With the literary studdings on off-Broadway marquees of names such as Shakespeare, Chekhov, Genet, Beckett, Ionesco, Brecht, Stephen Vincent Benet, and Williams, and with such newcomers as Harvey Schmidt, Tom Jones, and Jack Richardson (*The Prodigal*)—such offerings cannot help but be exciting and should allay the fear that drama is dying.

If one evaluates the last few years on Broadway, there is certainly some cause for hand-wringing and soul-searching. On the other hand, during the last ten years, the off-Broadway phenomenon (as well as the "little theater" movement throughout the country) has been developing at such a rate that we now have two different "theaters"; and the prophets of decay must designate for whom their bells are tolling. Even off-Broadway productions have had strong criticism (and rightly so); but while they are within the range of the less-than-affluent society; where controversy can still rage and new images can form; where ideas are still important—here is hope for the future of the American stage. There is still a theater in the United States and, from all present evidence, it is still alive and kicking in that nebulous, economically rather than geographically located, Uptown-Greenwich Village-Second Avenue-"little theater" spirit called "off-Broadway."



John Gassner is a contributing editor to DRAMA CRITIQUE.



## THE AMERICAN THEATER'S ANTHOLOGIST-IN-CHIEF \*

By MAUREEN McMANUS

John Gassner has been called "the American theater's anthologist-in-chief." His *Best Plays* series, *A Treasury of the Theatre*, *Masters of the Drama*, the *Theatre in Our Times*, *Form and Idea in the Modern Theatre* are among the books which have established this reputation. This in turn has resulted in a following of an enthusiastic and very large public for his knowledgeable counseling on the theater.

Professor Gassner's interest in the theatre started early while he traveled throughout Europe with his mother and lived for a while in Central European capitals such as Budapest and Vienna before World War I. At Columbia University his interest in literature and theatre was sharpened by his professors, Brander Matthews, George C. D. O'Dell (*Annals of the New York Stage*), John Erskine, and Mark Van Doren. He started publishing while at college and became an assiduous playgoer then. Professor Gassner was part of a literary group there with Clifton Fadiman, Lionel Trilling, Guy Endore, and others.

After receiving his M.A. degree and holding the William Mitchell Fellowship in Arts and Letters, he began to review poetry for Irita Van Doren of the *Herald Tribune* and wrote for several other publications, among them *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *The New York Times*, *The Saturday Review of Literature*, *Current History*, *The Forum*, *Theatre Arts*, etc. He also worked as an auxiliary editor for D. Appleton, taught German at the Pelman Institute, lectured on English Literature, and translated and adapted plays for the Theatre Guild after 1929.

Beginning with 1928, John Gassner helped a prominent banker to write several books on economic subjects and a prominent psychoanalyst to start "The Psychoanalytic Quarterly," still the leading publication in the field. He also published verse and reviewed books for periodicals.

In 1931, Gassner became the Theatre Guild's American Playreader, and a few years later was appointed Chairman of the Play Department of the Theatre Guild. He remained in that position, reading, selecting, helping to revise plays for production by the Theatre Guild until 1944 when he resigned to assume the management of a Play Department for Columbia Pictures Corporation in the East, although he never completely severed relations with the Theatre Guild. In 1948, Professor Gassner became an independent Broadway producer and became more fully involved with college teaching than previously.

\* Reprinted with special permission of Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York.

He started teaching on a part-time basis, mostly in the evening at Hunter College in 1928, teaching English and Comparative Literature. In 1937, he started teaching during the summers at the Bread Loaf Writers Conference in Vermont, and went to Bryn Mawr once a week as a visiting professor to teach playwriting at Bryn Mawr and Haverford College. Then in 1940, he joined the Dramatic Workshop of the New School in New York City as head of the courses in theatre history and dramatic literature. He resigned in 1949 when he became a lecturer in Dramatic Arts at Columbia University.

In 1949, Professor Gassner received a Guggenheim Fellowship and went abroad in 1950 to study the European theatre. On his return he joined the Queens College English Department as an Associate Professor while continuing to teach at Columbia in the School of Dramatic Arts. In 1956, Yale University established a chair for Professor Gassner at the School of Drama which had been founded by the famous George Pierce Baker. He now teaches Baker's famous playwriting course at Yale and holds the chair of Sterling Professor of Playwriting and Dramatic Literature at Yale University. It is considered the highest position in the academic world of the theatre.

From 1935 on Professor Gassner also functioned as a drama critic, and has written dramatic criticism for many publications. In 1936 he was elected a member of the New York Drama Critics Circle, of which he is a member emeritus now.

Professor Gassner has published over twenty books in the fields of drama, and is the drama critic for the *Educational Theatre Journal*, the official organ of the American Educational Theatre.

He is associated with many organizations: Phi Beta Kappa, the National Theatre Conference, the American National Theatre and Academy, the American Educational Theatre Association, the Modern Language Association, the Milton Society (life member), *Les Amis de Romain Rolland* (Paris), The Shaw Society of London (Vice-President), the National Association of Teachers of English, etc. He is one of the two permanent judges of the Arts of the Theatre Foundation which gives grants to promising playwrights. Professor Gassner was, with the late Theresa Helburn of the Theatre Guild, in charge of the Bureau of New Plays which discovered and assisted many promising writers between 1937 and 1942; among their discoveries were Arthur Miller, Norman Rosten, and Tennessee Williams.

He translated and adapted plays. Among these were "Peace Palace" (originally *Versailles* by Emil Ludwig), "Jeremiah" (by Stefan Zweig originally, produced by the Theatre Guild in 1938), and a dramatization of Robinson Jeffers' "The Tower Beyond Tragedy," in which Judith Anderson appeared on the West Coast. Professor Gassner has also written several plays produced on TV by Omnibus, and was an editorial advisor to Omnibus when it was subsidized by the Ford Foundation.

Recently Professor Gassner went to Washington to receive the American Educational Theatre Award for 1959—an award given for making a major contribution to the American theatre.

## DRAMA BOOKSHELF

**THEATRE AT THE CROSSROADS.** By John Gassner. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960; pp. 327. \$5.95.

John Gassner, celebrated as a collector of the drama as well as an eminent critic of it, makes further impact with his *Theatre at the Crossroads*. The distinguished anthologist surveys fifty-odd years of American theatrical enterprise in a rare attempt not only to describe its major contributors and contributions, but beyond and more important than that, to bring a perspective out of his years of spectatorship and to arrive at a definition and a diagnosis of what has happened to it. More than reminiscences and clippings of theatric events in casual chronological order, the book is a point of view in review form.

Gassner seems to have no idols or pet prejudices in a world that breeds both all too easily. He challenges all who work at the drama—whether secure in the box office assurance of Shubert Alley or struggling for a patronage in the institution now known as “off-Broadway”—to meet the severest of demands or else to withdraw from an art whose mediocrity and confused compromise so often pervert it into a business in this scientific century. He is sternest with the promising. His chapter on Tennessee Williams, for example, covers the controversial poet's record from *The Glass Menagerie* to *Sweet Bird of Youth* and it is, perhaps, the fairest evaluation of him thus far in that it shrewdly separates artistic liberty from sick, self-indulgent license. He chides the passionate awkwardness of the young O'Neill while later confirming his greatness in the recent post-humous revival in careful, objective, common-sense language. Like the whole survey, it is outspoken without verbosity and long-windedness, plainspoken without ever seeming insensitive.

Though most of Mr. Gassner's specific critiques deal with plays of the post World War II years (the 1959-60 season closes out the book), his overall analyses reach back to Ibsen's revolution of realism, examine the stream of the less literal and more daring European influences for good and ill (Anouilh, Giraudoux, Brecht, Eliot, Pirandello, Ionesco), and insist hopefully that the next half-century will resolve present promises in a return to greatness.

Certainly his journal of the first half of the twentieth century is a probing and principled study.

James Foote  
Mercy College, Detroit

**CHRISTIAN THEATRE.** By Robert Speaight. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1960; pp. 140. \$2.95.

In little room, this survey attempts with gratifying success “to trace the Christian presence in the more important sections of European drama during the past seven hundred years.” At the heart of the book is Shakespeare, given “the preponderant place which is his by right of genius,” and because in him “there is

a concert of Christian themes which are plain to hear when you have explained their allegory." Necessarily, it excludes much. But its exposition and comment are concise, and its clarity is itself a kind of wit—balanced, unruffled, and wise. The wisdom is that of an actor and man of letters for whom the final test of a play is its theatrical effectiveness in realizing the playwright's intention.

By refusing to confine his view of the Christian theatre to "those plays which had been written with a devotional intention," Mr. Speaight has chosen the better part. The result is a survey that has both an assured largeness of sweep and a reassuring precision of detail, so that the comprehensiveness of its general judgments gains weight from the justice of its particular judgments.

Let me cite a few examples, beginning with his estimate of the York cycle, staged during the York Festival of 1957: "The plays demonstrated their power over an audience to whom much of their eschatology was repugnant. They were simple in the way that Brecht is simple, and popular in the way that he is popular, for they told a story that mattered to everyone in a way that everyone could understand." And then the final word on medieval drama: "There is nothing in (it) to match Chaucer's *Troilus and Cryseyde* for psychological insight; nothing of which one can say, *mutatis mutandis*, as one may say of Chartres: 'these are the loveliest, as well as the holiest, things that were ever made in glass or stone'. But then the intention of a cathedral, whatever its style, is perpendicular, whereas the dramatist must never lose sight of his next-door neighbour." Of the Tudor interludes and Sir David Lyndsay's *The Three Estates*: "Here there is more than a single anticipation of the mythology of the Common Man. It is a rather bleak and bustling humanism that blows down to us across the Tweed, and indeed the Christian content of these plays diminishes as their ethical purposes become more explicit." And further: "Not all these plays, by any means, were Protestant in tone or intention, but they belonged to a *genre* which the Protestant *ethos*, moralizing rather than mystical, naturally favored. They led to *Comus* and *Samson Agonistes*; to a literary rather than a theatrical conclusion."

In describing the "supreme achievement" of the Elizabethan theatre, he again provides the kind of summation that a teacher turns to, when looking for sign-posts to guide his students, because it simplifies by clarifying, rather than because it clarifies by simplifying: "There were seen to be limits to what the theatre could say about God; there were none to what it could say about man. The difference between the medieval and the Renaissance theatre is not the difference between Christian and pagan, or between Catholics and Protestant. It is, to a very large degree, the difference between a natural and a revealed theology."

The book dips in interest, if not in quality, in the chapters immediately after Shakespeare: "The Jesuits and Calderons," and "Cornielle and Racine." It treats of the Jesuit theatre, rather than its drama; and there is no indication that Mr. Speaight knows much of the latter beyond what the histories tell. In any case, his treatment lacks the affection and immediacy which medieval and Renaissance drama have for him, and which stimulate the reader to go burrowing for neglected treasures. The Spanish drama is confined to Calderon's *autos sacramentale*. To say the least, this is excluding a great deal. The author seems to rely heavily on A. A. Parker's studies, as if his knowledge of these plays, despite his belief in their

theatrical viability (given the right audience), had been gained at second hand. His verdict: "The modern spectator is at liberty to find this kind of drama boring, because it seems to him either unromantic or unreal. But it is neither more nor less than a drama of ideas, and it is only a shade more abstract than a play like Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* or O'Casey's *Within the Gates*. The *autos* of Calderon are an essentially intellectual theatre; they were capable of stirring the emotions, but they refused to flatter them at the expense of the mind." His intention here is to reclaim and rehabilitate, as it is in the chapter on French neo-classic drama where, for a change, there is a refreshing emphasis on Corneille, instead of Racine, with an interesting study of *Polyeucte*.

Interest rises again in the final chapter, "Loss and Recovery," which surveys the modern stage; and here Mr. Speaight is as sure-footed and dexterous as one could wish. How much controversy, for example, is condensed in his witty judgment of Shaw's masterpiece: "*Saint Joan*, in fact, is a magnificent and moving play about something that never really happened." He gives due credit to John Massfield, both as dramatist and as moving spirit in the English revival of liturgical drama. The United States is represented only by Emmet Lavery, the "native but very attenuated Catholicism of Eugene O'Neill" in his autobiographical play; and, curiously enough, Archibald Macleish's *J.B.* He accords to the latter play "eloquence and imagination," but comments that at the end "God and man are left regarding each other across a gulf which only the Incarnation could bridge." He gives Claudel his innings, but does not let poetry and religion dazzle his critical sense: he considers those plays written before the poet's conversion "in some respects superior" to the later ones.

Mr. Speaight brings us down to the current season with high praise of Jean Anouilh's *Becket*: "The hint dropped by Mr. Eliot had been adroitly taken, and the play, though completely different in tone, style and intention from *Murder in the Cathedral*, is a worthy companion to it." And so to the final verdict; viz., that where the faith is unchallenged, Christian theatre will be devotional, tending to complacency; and that where Christianity comes to grips with modern life, its theatre will be dynamic:

Where the Church is a vigorous and fighting minority, but sensitive to the movement of the contemporary world, the Christian play will seem to spring from a deeper source and it will certainly have a greater impact. For the subject of the theatre is man, and it is in proportion to his humanity—to the person he is rather than to the principles he proclaims—that the 'man of God' will earn a place in it.

This is the forty-first volume to appear in the ambitious *Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, and it is good to have the subject of Christian theatre represented therein by so able and winning a book.

Hugh Dickinson  
Loyola University, Chicago

DRAMA FOR WOMEN. By Alison Graham-Campbell and Frank Lambe. London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1960; pp. 158. \$1.75.

This is a very practical book for the beginner in amateur theatricals. The authors, who have had much experience in adjudicating festivals, presuppose complete ignorance concerning play production on the part of the persons to whom their book is addressed. Consequently, Chapter One deals with "The Problem of What to Act," and the succeeding chapters, in turn, take up the most elemental facts of production, staging and stage management, costume and properties, and "Things Not to be Forgotten." Actually, it could conceivably be a written critique of a festival which has presented all the types of plays, and then has been advised by the judge as to what should have been done.

The many references to English customs and institutions limit the scope of the book, for if the neophyte is not acquainted with counterparts in his own country, he still must seek further enlightenment. This is true, also, of the classified bibliography to which the authors constantly refer. All of the volumes listed there are English publications, which, while probably most helpful in London, are not even available in Kansas City.

Ingenious devices in showing how to make something out of nothing will be helpful to the amateur who must needs call on his imagination for most of his staging. The authors, seemingly, have met and conquered every baffling situation that could challenge a producer. It is interesting to note that the co-authors were unknown to each other, but through their experiences as members of the Guild of Drama Adjudicators, each had come to realize that so many thousands of struggling women needed some assistance. Discussion with the publisher culminated in this co-operative venture which, undoubtedly, will be welcomed by the many groups affiliated to the British Drama League.

Sister Immaculate, S.S.J.  
National Catholic Theatre Conference  
Washington, D.C.

THE STAGE AND THE SCHOOL. By Katherine Anne Ommanney. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1960; pp. 530. \$5.20.

Published at a time when drama directors are becoming ever more conscious of a responsibility of sharing the beauties of their art with the masses, the Third Edition of *The Stage and the School* by Miss Anne Ommanney makes a timely appearance.

The author fulfills the purpose stated in the Preface, "The Third Edition is designed to make the students feel at home in the theatre — on either side of the footlights." This attractive text will make any director feel confident he is assisting in the tremendous task of removing the claim of drama from the esoteric few.

The director who gears the aim of a drama course to the spectator will find in concentration on Part Two of the text, "Understanding the Drama" and



Part Five, "Motion Pictures, Radio and Television," those chapters which will serve as a basis. Now is the time to raise the taste of the spectators. If content, discussion problems, and practical applications are used, a knowledge of types of drama, an understanding of the structure of plays, as well as styles of presentation, should lead the spectator to appreciate the harmony in this medium. The well-outlined history of drama should serve as a frame work for future reading. In Part Five a complete exposition of the techniques employed in motion pictures, radio, and television is clearly presented. From this information, criteria of judgment easily can be set up.

The director whose aim is to train the actor—the potential giver of dramatic arts to the many, whether on professional, amateur, or educational level—will find in Part Three, "Interpreting the Drama" and in Part Four, "Producing the Drama"—the chapters which will lead to a complete understanding of acting technique, an appreciation of the need for voice training and good diction, as well as an awareness of the necessity of body coordination and control. These are the fundamental tools with which the actor and director work.

This reviewer is particularly grateful that the author considers the work on voice and diction worthy of forty pages of this comprehensive survey. For too long has the voice, its mechanism and possibilities, been neglected. Concrete and practical exercises to achieve the highest performance are drawn again from the fruitful years of the author's experience.

The fascinating feature of a "picture essay" on how a play is born and grows to maturity attracts immediate attention. The magic of theatre becomes apparent.

By using abundant illustration of excellent plates, many of which were taken specifically for this text, the author makes the principles explained truly come to life. There are nationally and internationally famous actors and technicians who found success by such methods as are clearly presented in this text.

Any director will be pleased to know the rights to scenes are cleared for classroom use from eighteen plays—plays a director would want his student to know.

Obvious in point of view is Miss Ommanney's interest in the aesthetic education of the individual. Drama is a cultural force and the treasures the author chooses to open before the minds of students will make them perceive a beauty, a vision of life hitherto hidden. From this enjoyment and appreciation will flow an enrichment in the student's own life.

The contents of the Third Edition of *The Stage and the School* are so comprehensive and flexible that it can easily be adapted as a basis for a one-through-four-year course in drama appreciation or technique. In the task of strengthening the cultural force of America, can a director-teacher ask for more?

Sister Mary Janet, O.S.B.  
Regis H.S., Eau Claire, Wisc.

## INDEX TO VOLUME THREE

	PAGE
BRADY, Leo. The Top of the Tree: Notes on a Production of <i>The Satin Slipper</i> .....	19
CHESTERTON, G. K. The Meaning of Theatre.....	108
DRAMA BOOKSHELF .....	42, 88, 139
FISKE, Mother Adele, R.S.J. The Catholic Theatre by Paul Claudel.....	6
GRANDE, Brother Luke M., F.S.C. On Off-Broadway.....	132
HUGHES, R. E. Dryden's <i>All For Love</i> : the Sensual Dilemma .....	68
JUDINE, Sister Mary, I.H.M. The Function of the Guns in <i>Hedda Gabler</i> .....	39
LAVERY, Emmet. The World of Philip Barry.....	98
MADELEVA, Sister Mary, C.S.C., BROWNE, E. Martin, and DIETZ, H. Bertold. <i>The Mystery of Mary</i> : an Adaptation of the Lincoln Cycle of Mystery Plays.....	75
McALEER, John J. Marlowe's Solar Symbolism.....	111
McMANUS, Maureen. The American Theater's Anthologist-in-Chief.....	137
NCTC CONTACT PLACEMENT SERVICE.....	46, 94
ROXBURGH, Gilbert, O.P. Mind, Emotion, and Wagner's Dream.....	55
STAMBUSKY, Alan A. Bernard Shaw's Farcical Vision: Comic Perspective in the Traditional Mode.....	82
STAPLETON, Gabriel, S.D.S. The Conference and Religious Drama.....	2
A Faith that Fathers Fine Delight.....	50
WATERS, Harold Arthur. Woman's Artistic Function in the Plays of Paul Claudel.....	11
ZIMMERMANN, Gereon. Prouheze in Hell and Heaven: Claudel Classic Adapted to Television.....	25

